

Increased Saudi security in Karachi

KARACHI (AP) — A security net was thrown over Saudi Arabian diplomats in this southern port city Wednesday after a vice consul was shot and seriously wounded, police and hospital officials said. Hasan Al Amri was headed home late Tuesday when a gunman opened fire, said Saudi Arabia's news agency. The vice consul was flown back to Saudi Arabia later Wednesday, hospital officials in Karachi said. Police said no arrests have been made and no one was accepted responsibility. The gunman fired three times before escaping. One bullet hit Amri in the jaw and neck. Police said they have posted guards around Saudi officials in Pakistan's largest city. More than one year ago the personal secretary in the Saudi consul-general was shot and wounded. No one was ever arrested but police suspected the gunman was someone angry after being denied a visa. Amri was flown out of Karachi in a plane fitted with medical equipment. The aircraft had arrived earlier Wednesday from Saudi Arabia. The diplomat had an operation after the shooting and was still under intensive care when he left Pakistan, sources said.

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AROUND THE WORLD...

Fate of 'freed' French girls a mystery

BEIRUT (AP) — There was no trace Wednesday of two French girls reportedly freed Christmas eve by Abu Nidal's Palestinian group after 13 months in captivity, triggering speculation they have still not been released. Walid Khaled, spokesman for Abu Nidal's Fateh Revolutionary Council, said Monday that the girls, Marie-Laure Bettelin, 7, and her sister Virginie, 6, had been freed and were on their way to Paris by plane. But they never arrived in the French capital. Amid a series of contradictory statements by Fateh Revolutionary Council, one of the group's officials said Wednesday in west Beirut: "Comrade Walid Khaled revealed the latest information on the two French girls yesterday. There is nothing new on them."

Khamenei, Sharra hold talks

NICOSIA (R) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharra and Iranian President Ali Khamenei called for closer ties in talks in Tehran Wednesday, Iran's IRNA news agency said. Khamenei praised Syria for its anti-Israel stance and described Damascus as a major Iranian ally, said IRNA. Sharra, who arrived Tuesday, also met his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati and conveyed greetings from Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, IRNA said. It said Sharra discussed developments in the region and called for better ties between the two countries. Khamenei also said ties should be expanded.

Andreotti: Israel will join peace moves

ALGIERS (R) — Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti said Wednesday he was confident Israel would join Middle East peace efforts by the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Andreotti, on a three-day official visit to Algeria, said after a meeting with President Chadli Benjedid that a new situation had been created by the Palestine National Council meeting last month in Algiers. In remarks quoted by the official news agency APS, the Italian minister hailed the start of dialogue between Washington and the PLO, initiated earlier this month. "We are confident that even Israel will find ways of associating itself with this peace project," he said.

Renewed anti-African protest in Nanking

NANKING (R) — Thousands of angry Chinese took to the streets of Nanking Wednesday, defying riot police and a ban on demonstrations, in renewed protests against African students in the East China city. Hundreds of police, some in riot gear and many armed with batons, faced the crowd in the city centre. "What we want is for the government to deal justly with the situation," said a Chinese student. It was the third successive night of street protests after a clash between African students and Chinese employees of Hehai University Saturday.

Afghan rebels reject Soviet call

NICOSIA (R) — Afghan rebel groups based in Iran and Pakistan have condemned Soviet proposal for a U.N. peacekeeping force in Afghanistan, Tehran Radio reported. The radio said the rebels described as a "colonialist conspiracy" the suggestion to the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 7 by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The radio said the rebel statement followed talks in Tehran between the Iran-based alliance led by Muhammad Karim Khalil and the Pakistan-based group headed by Burhanuddin Rabbani (see page 2).

Iranian millionaire to be lashed, executed

NICOSIA (R) — An Iranian court Wednesday condemned a multi-millionaire to death for corruption and also ordered that he and a woman friend be flogged for an illegal sex act. Seyyed Ali Mousavi, a former teacher, set up a non-interest loan foundation and became a multi-millionaire after the 1979 revolution, the Iranian news agency IRNA said. Mousavi, who headed the private Nabavat foundation, was also ordered to pay 1.21 billion rials (\$17.8 million) to 17 creditors.

Red Cross boosts Sudan relief

KAMPALA (R) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has begun using a French air force transport plane to boost famine-relief in rebel-held areas of southern Sudan. The C-160 Transport made its first flight Monday from Uganda's international airport at Entebbe near Kampala, to Yiro, a small settlement occupied by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army, Arthur Bisig, the ICRC's delegate in Uganda, said Wednesday. Bisig told Reuters the Transall, which can carry a payload of up to 10 tonnes, will greatly increase the ICRC's capacity to fly food and medical supplies into three rebel-held settlements in southern Sudan.

Qatar denounces U.S. threats against Libya

NICOSIA (R) — Qatar expressed grave concern Wednesday about American threats against Libya over a chemical plant the United States claims producing weapons. "Qatar, which follows with grave concern the American threats and media campaign against Libya under the pretext it possesses a chemical weapons plant, considers that there is nothing to justify these threats," an authoritative source told the Qatar News Agency. "The threat to use force completely contradicts the current general trend in the world to rely on dialogue and peaceful means to resolve international conflicts."

GCC to mediate Bahrain-Qatar row

NICOSIA (R) — Bahrain and Qatar have agreed to allow fellow members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to try to settle a long-standing territorial dispute over a cluster of islands, a Gulf official said. He said the four other members of the GCC had agreed at a summit in Bahrain last week to arbitrate. They also agreed to a Qatari request that if the attempt did not produce results within six months, the case should be submitted to the International Court at the Hague, the source added.

PLO office in Riyadh now embassy

RIYADH (R) — Saudi Arabia has decided to upgrade the PLO's office in the kingdom to an embassy as of Jan. 1, the Saudi Foreign Ministry said Wednesday. "The government of Saudi Arabia has decided to consider the Palestine Liberation Organisation office in Riyadh the embassy of Palestine," it said in a statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency. It said the PLO's representative in Riyadh would have the rank of ambassador.

Vatican denies Agca wrote to Pope

VATICAN CITY (R) — The Vatican denied an Italian news agency report Wednesday that the Turk serving a life sentence for shooting Pope John Paul in 1981 had asked the pontiff for help in obtaining a pardon from Italy's president. The report by the small Italian news agency ADN Kronos, carried by Italian newspapers, said Mehmet Ali Agca made his request in a Christmas letter to the Pope and that the Pope responded by sending him a gift. Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said, however, that there had been no letter from Agca and no gift from the Pope.

King chairs Foreign Ministry meeting

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Wednesday chaired a meeting at the Foreign Ministry (see photo) attended by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai, Royal Court Chief and the King's advisor on Armed Forces Affairs Field Marshal Sharif Zaid Ibn Shakir, and Deputy Prime Minister



and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem. During the meeting King Hussein gave his directives on various issues.

Arabs urged to boost help housing in occupied territories

AMMAN (T.T.) — The Joint Jordanian-Palestinian Committee for the Steadfastness of the Palestinian People Wednesday opened a two-day symposium on housing in the occupied Arab territories with calls on the Arab World to increase support for the Palestinian people in a drive to consolidate the Palestinian identity and maintain the Arab presence in the occupied lands.

The meeting will discuss working papers on the Israeli occupation authorities' plans in occupied Palestine, the role of housing in bolstering the steadfastness of the Arab inhabitants there and sources of financing housing projects for them.

Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, who represented the Jordanian side at the talks, said the symposium was another link in a chain of joint Jordanian-Palestinian moves to back the Palestinian people's steadfastness in the face of Israel's colonisation programmes.

Qatanani, director of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs, reviewed Israel's repressive measures aimed at evicting the Arab population from the occupied territories and setting up Jewish settlements there as well as demolishing Arab homes and imposing restrictions on the Palestinians cultivating their agricultural lands.

"Housing in the occupied territories assumes special importance due to its direct relation with the Arab-Israeli conflict and its social and economic effects on the local population and the people's jobs and livelihoods," Qatanani said.

"All measures should be taken on the Arab side to counter Israel's Judaisation policies and plans to swallow up Arab territory," he said.

He said the Israelis had so far confiscated 53 per cent of the Arab lands in the West Bank and Gaza.

Reviewing Israel's settlement policies, Bseiso said that today the Israelis had built 222 settlements, of which 199 are in the West Bank housing 154,000 Jewish settlers.

He reviewed the joint committee's efforts in helping the Palestinians set up homes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through their own personal efforts or with the help of local charitable organisations.

The head of the Palestinian side to the meeting, Dr. Fuad Bseiso, paid tribute to Jordan's efforts and support for the Palestinian people and repeated that the current meeting was part of joint endeavours to boost the steadfastness of the Palestinians in the face of Israel's oppression.

Israel's expansionist plans, he said, require a pan-Arab stance and a concerted effort to set up Arab housing projects for the local inhabitants in a bid to boost their steadfastness.

Reviewing Israel's settlement policies, Bseiso said that today the Israelis had built 222 settlements, of which 199 are in the West Bank housing 154,000 Jewish settlers.

He spoke of reports from Israel spoke of a new "peace initiative"

Troops kill Palestinian; Rabin sees new anti-uprising tactics

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot and killed a Palestinian teenager and wounded four other Palestinians in clashes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip Wednesday, while a general strike shut shops and offices throughout the occupied territories.

Police used tear-gas to disperse stone throwers in Arab Jerusalem, and the police spokesman said that three Jordanian officers had been detained.

In Gaza, the army clamped a curfew on four refugee camps, confining 150,000 Palestinians to their homes.

In the West Bank city of Nablus, 18-year-old Samir Shehada was shot to death during a clash with troops.

Three Palestinians were wounded by army gunfire in the nearby town of Tulkarem, hospital officials said. A 13-year-old boy was shot and wounded in a stone-throwing clash in the Bureij refugee camp near Gaza City, hospital officials and reporters said.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin toured the troubled Gaza Strip Tuesday and said that "traffic security" remained the

army's main problem.

Shehada was the second Palestinian killed in as many days, and his death raised to at least 347 the number of Palestinians killed since the uprising against Israeli rule began in the occupied territories Dec. 8, 1987.

Shops closed, public transports came to a standstill and labourers stayed away from work to honour Wednesday's strike called by uprising leaders to commemorate the 1920 battle of Maithalut between French and Arab forces in Syria.

On Tuesday, one Palestinian was killed in clashes with Israeli troops and at least 19 were wounded.

Troops raiding the West Bank village of Alwein encountered a stone-throwing mob and opened fire, an army spokesman said.

Officials at nearby Ramallah hospital reported that 25-year-old villager Mohammad Omar Ahmad Khalil died of gunshot wounds.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin toured the troubled Gaza Strip Tuesday and said that "traffic security" remained the

PLO: U.S. dialogue not enough for Mideast peace

By Najwa Najjar
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

to realising a just and comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday morning said the PLO delegation's talks here covered issues related to a proposed Arab summit and crystallising a united Arab position behind the new PLO strategy for Middle East peace which is in line with the will of the international community.

The international community supports the idea of convening an effective international conference with the participation of the PLO and all other parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the five permanent members of the Security Council and sees the first step in this direction as setting up a preparatory committee made up of the permanent Security Council members to contact all sides to iron out differences.

Today, the U.S. maintains a different interpretation of the international conference and calls for direct Arab-

(Continued on page 2)

No Mubarak visit to Israel for time being

Baz assails 'gimmicks'

Arabs urged to boost help housing in occupied territories

CAIRO (AP) — A senior aide to President Hosni Mubarak Wednesday called Israel's latest peace proposals "gimmicks" and urged the new American administration to pressure the Zionist state to take a more flexible position towards peace talks.

Osama Al Baz, head of Mubarak's political office, said Israel was not serious in its efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue and ruled out a visit by the Egyptian president to Israel for the time being.

Baz said he hoped international pressure would force Israel to change its position and to meet the Palestinians halfway.

He spoke to foreign and Egyptian reporters at a press conference organised by the Foreign Press Association in Cairo.

"(Israel) is presenting counter proposals that, in our opinion, are not serious proposals for peace but rather gimmicks that are intended in direct world attention from the real issues in order to give the false impression that there is in effect a new Israeli position," Baz said.

He said reports from Israel spoke of a new "peace initiative"

proposed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir which revolved around "autonomy" for Palestinians instead of an independent state.

"What we hear is right, what is being discussed in Israel is going back to either the formula of autonomy, which has been superseded and surpassed by events and by Israeli actions and policies, or holding elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

"There is no point in holding elections in order to set up a body to represent the Palestinians when there is in fact a body which represents Palestinians... it would be a farce," Baz stressed.

Egypt has played a major role in persuading the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to adopt a more moderate stance in order to get the peace process moving.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's

recognition of Israel's right to exist and his renunciation of terrorism prompted the United States to hold the first official contacts with the organisation earlier this month.

Baz lauded the American decision to start a direct dialogue with the PLO. Asked about what Egypt asked from the new administration of President-elect George Bush, he said:

"We would like the Bush administration to persuade Israel to be responsive and positive as the PLO proved to be, and we would expect the Bush administration to give the Middle East priority in its contacts with its allies in Europe and in the Soviet Union."

Baz also said Egypt expected the new administration to take a "positive role" in preparations for an international peace conference for the Middle East which would be held under the auspices of the United Nations.

"We do not ask for a biased American position, nor are we trying to get the United States to abandon Israel. We are not interested in driving a wedge between the United States and Israel. We are not interested in

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'Bomb caused Pan Am crash'

LOCKERBIE, Scotland (Agencies) — A bomb blew up Pan Am Flight 103 with 259 people aboard as it flew over Scotland a week ago, the Department of Transport said Wednesday.

A statement said investigators found "conclusive evidence of a detonating high explosive" in wreckage recovered from the Scottish countryside.

It said the evidence was in "two parts of the metal luggage pallet framework." Department of Transport officials said a pallet is a metal container for holding luggage put aboard aircraft.

The statement said: "The explosive residues recovered from the debris have been positively identified, and are consistent with the use of a high-performance plastic explosive."

The statement gave no information on the type of explosive, where it was hidden, or how it got aboard the aircraft.

"We don't know who did it," a U.S. State Department official involved in counter-terrorist activity said on condition of not being identified.

The statement was distributed to news organisations in London as investigators convened a news conference in Lockerbie, the Scottish village that bore the brunt of the Boeing 747's flaming wreckage on Dec. 21.

U.S. said in pledge not to pressure Israel over PLO

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — American Jewish leaders said Wednesday that the U.S. government had pledged not to press Israel to talk to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Morris Abram and Seymour Reich said Secretary of State George Shultz made the promise to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations after the United States opened a dialogue with the PLO this month.

Shultz said there was no intention on the part of the U.S. government to pressure Israel to get into a dialogue with the PLO.

Abram, outgoing chairman of the conference of presidents, told reporters.

Shultz also reaffirmed strong opposition to an independent Palestinian state and said Jerusalem must remain "united."

Abram added:

The U.S. Jewish leaders stressed it was important for Israel to speak with one voice, after a

period of presenting two rival foreign policies, and said they were counting on Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to come up with his own peace initiative.

Abram also called on PLO leader Yasser Arafat to "prove"

he was interested in peace by ordering a halt to the year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories.

"One way or another, the violence must cease on the West Bank as a prelude to any kind of peace process," Abram said.

The legislators made the call in a meeting chaired by Mahdi himself Tuesday night, it said.

Wednesday's demonstrations spread across Khartoum, focused on the cabinet offices where riot police, armed with

Afghan rebel leader rules out role for ex-king in settlement

NICOSIA (Agencies) — The leader of the Pakistan-based Afghan Mujahideen guerrilla alliance has rejected a role in any settlement in Afghanistan for ex-king Zahir Shah.

"Zahir Shah belongs to history and he has no role in Afghanistan and its political future," Burhanuddin Rabbani was quoted by the Iranian News Agency (IRNA) as saying at a news conference in Tehran Tuesday.

The Soviet Union recently contacted the ex-king in Italy where he lives in an effort to persuade him to take part in a settlement when Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan.

"The Mujahideen are on the verge of final victory and the formation of a government," IRNA quoted Rabbani as saying.

Rabbani, who led the Mujahideen team in talks with the Soviet Union in Saudi Arabia, denied suggestions that there was a major rift between Pakistan and Iran-based groups.

Speaking in the presence of the spokesman for the Iran-based Mujahideen, Mohammed Karim Khalili, he said: "There isn't any kind of difference or conflict between us."

He said Iranian and Pakistan Mujahideen would meet in the Pakistani town of Peshawar Feb. 15 "to decide on the future government in Afghanistan."

The Mujahideen would cooperate with three categories of officials in Afghanistan, Rabbani was quoted as saying — those forced to accept jobs with the Soviet-backed government in Kabul, those cooperating with the Mujahideen, and those "with

marked the anniversary each year with demonstrations. But this is the first time they have been allowed past the embassy main gate.

The delegation met embassy counsellor Vladimir Khanenkov and Third Secretary Ivan Zolotov for 45 minutes.

U.S. stand

The United States does not object to Zahir Shah taking part in forming a new Kabul government, U.S. Under-Secretary of State Michael Armacost said Tuesday.

The United States would not place any obstacles in the way of Zahir Shah's return to Afghanistan if it was the Afghan people's wish, Armacost told an internationally-televised Worldnet news conference from Washington.

In Washington, the U.S. State Department said Tuesday Afghanistan's communist government has begun to unravel and is unlikely to survive if Soviet forces withdraw from the country as scheduled.

"The shift of military momentum toward the resistance... probably is irreversible," the department said in an annual report on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

In his last presidential statement noting the anniversary of the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan, President Ronald Reagan said Tuesday he fully expects the Soviets to withdraw their troops by the target date of Feb. 15.

"I fully expect them to honour their obligation to withdraw completely by Feb. 15," the president said.

Surprise Soviet move

In London, Soviet diplomats surprised Afghan demonstrators Tuesday by inviting them into the embassy in London and assuring them that Moscow intended to abide by its pledge to pull all its troops out of Afghanistan by Feb. 15.

Three Afghan representatives said they were asked in when the Afghanistan Association in Britain arrived at the embassy to present a petition on the ninth anniversary of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Afghans opposed to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan have-



A Syrian soldier mans check-point in west Beirut. The Syrian deterrent force deployed in west Beirut have frequently intervened to end factional fighting (Sygma photo)

Syrian troops halt renewed Beirut Amal-Hizbollah clash

BEIRUT (R) — Syrian troops

took up positions in trouble spots in Beirut's southern suburbs after intervening to end fierce clashes between rival militiamen, security sources said Wednesday.

The fighting between militiamen of Amal and Hizbollah (Party of God) erupted Tuesday but ended that night after Syrian troops intervened, they added.

No casualties were reported in the exchanges involving machinegun fire and rocket-propelled grenades in the Ghobeir and Bir Al Abed districts in the densely-populated southern suburbs.

At least 29 people were killed and 72 wounded in five days of fighting between Amal and Hizbollah in the southern suburbs last month and afterwards spilled over into west Beirut.

The two factions, vying for

dominance of Lebanon's 1.5 million Shi'ites, have frequently fought since 1984 when Hizbollah emerged as a challenge to Amal.

Amal ousted some 1,000 Hizbollah fighters from South Lebanon in April. In May two sides battled in the suburbs and some 500 people were killed.

Syria, which maintains some 25,000 troops in Lebanon, halted the May battles by deploying thousands of soldiers in the suburbs.

Hizbollah, financed and ideologically inspired by Iran, seeks a greater political role among Lebanon's Shi'ites while Amal wants to maintain its leading role.

Ex-Mossad chief details human smuggling

TEL AVIV (AP) — Isser Harel, the former chief of Israel's Mossad intelligence service, was quoted as saying Tuesday that Mossad agents have cooperated with the Spanish Franco regime to smuggle some 76,000 Jews out of Arab states in North Africa.

In a Ben Gurion University lecture Tuesday, Harel said Israel began an operation aimed at underground Jewish emigration from North Africa's Arab states as early as 1955, by sending a special agent, Israel radio reported.

The agent returned with a report that Jewish youths in the Arab countries of North Africa were ready to organise "self-defense" units.

About 25,000 Harel was quoted as saying, emigrated with the help of false documents. But at a later stage, it became clear the method could not fit the rest of North Africa's Jewry.

Some 76,000 Jews were thus taken out with the help of the fascist Franco regime in Spain, the radio quoted Harel as saying.

"To our surprise, senior officials of the Franco regime in Spain agreed to cooperate with us," the local item news agency quoted Harel as saying. Israel paid about \$500,000 for that cooperation.

The former Mossad chief was quoted as saying that these Jews were smuggled to the Spanish-controlled zones in North Africa. From there, they were taken via the sea to Gibraltar, Spain, the French port of Marseilles and, finally, Israel.

The former Mossad chief was

also quoted as saying that when the operation started, Israel's leadership headed by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion gave an order to deny immigration to the elderly, disabled or chronically sick people.

However the order was canceled after Harel asked Ben-Gurion what would happen to a Jewish widow and her 10 children whom Mossad agents found in a remote corner of Morocco.

In response, Ben-Gurion ordered to bring all the Jews of North Africa to Israel, Itim quoted Harel as saying.

Harel was responsible for illegal emigration in his capacity as Mossad chief from 1952 to 1963.

3 commandos killed in battle with Israelis

SIDON (Agencies) — Three Palestinian commandos clashed in a six-hour shootout with Israeli troops in northern Israel early Wednesday, the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) said.

It reported in a communiqué that the gunbattle erupted at 4 a.m. (0200 GMT) near the northern Israeli town of Manara after the commandos crossed the border from South Lebanon.

"The fate of the attackers is unknown. More details will be released later," the communiqué said.

The PLF is a small faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The faction's leader, Taalat Yacoub, died of a heart attack in Algiers last month after a meeting of the Palestine National Council.

The PLF communiqué said Wednesday's attack was "dedicated as a memorial for Talat Yacoub, a champion of armed struggle to liberate Palestine."

An Israeli spokesman said Israeli troops killed three Palestinian fighters trying to cross the border from Lebanon during the night.

It was the second time in three days soldiers clashed with commandos at the Lebanese village of Mus Al Jabel, close to the Israeli settlement of Kibbutz Manara. The army said Monday that it killed another three commandos.

Before Wednesday's clash, an Israeli army spokesman said its troops and the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia had encountered commandos 632 times in Lebanon in 1988.

PLO: Dialogue is not enough

(Continued from page 1)

is that Shamir wants (the Camp David provisions) under the auspices of the two superpowers instead of one," he said. "Any continuation of this policy of blindness will only lead to a deadlock," he said.

Abed Rabbo, who attended a round of talks between the PLO and the U.S. in Tunis earlier this month — the first formal meeting between the two sides in 13 years — said another encounter was scheduled to be held in the second half of February to discuss "political issues."

He said he believed that the U.S. administration of George Bush, who takes office Jan. 20, will continue the same policy outlined by the outgoing Reagan administration. "I don't see any reason why it should not," Abed Rabbo said.

Answering a question whether the U.S. goal of opening a dialogue with the PLO was an end to the one-year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, Abed Rabbo said the intifada was not an issue for discussions with the U.S.

However, he disclosed that a document prepared by Shultz and passed on to the PLO through the Swedish government in early December "hinted at a moratorium (on the uprising) once negotiations begin at the international conference."

"But, we said that unless this clause was cancelled, we would not discuss anything. Subsequently, the clause was cancelled," Abed Rabbo said.

"The intifada is a movement of an entire people, not a military or paramilitary operation."

Vowing that the uprising

will continue until the Palestinian people achieve their goal of an independent state, Abed Rabbo said: "Without the intifada, all that is presently being discussed will not mean anything. It is our basic line of policy."

According to Abed Rabbo, the immediate political programme of the PLO includes strengthened relations with Arab states, with particular focus on the countries in confrontation line with Israel. In this context, Abed Rabbo indicated that there was a possibility of rapprochement between the PLO and Syria. "We are hoping for a Palestinian-Syrian dialogue," he said without elaboration.

An Arab summit is expected to be held in the next two months. By then, the PLO is also expected to announce a provisional government representing the Palestinian people inside and outside the occupied territories, Abed Rabbo said. "Studies and consultations on the provisional government are ongoing and details will be discussed at the next meeting of the PLO Executive Committee," he said.

Asked why Mustafa Al-Zibari, representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) did not attend this week's meeting of the PLO Executive Committee in Bagdad and why he voiced criticism of the PLO chairman's peace strategy, Abed Rabbo said there had always been differences within the PLO. "But we have proved that we can solve these problems," he said. "Moreover, due to the intifada, the differences have been reduced and we can call them 'ijtihad' (interpretations)," he said.

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Vowing that the uprising

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Cleric rumoured missing arrives in Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddine, a leading Lebanese Shi'ite cleric, arrived in Damascus Tuesday after a month's visit to Iran that he called "extremely positive." Shamseddine, acting chairman of the Lebanese Higher Supreme Shi'ite Council, met with Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and other top officials to discuss the situation in Lebanon.

Israel frees 12 Lebanese

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel freed 12 Lebanese Tuesday after clearing them of involvement in a suicide car bomb attack that killed eight soldiers near the Israeli-Lebanese border in October. Sources said the army returned the nine men and three women to the southern Lebanese villages of Markabé and Kafra Kela in Israel's self-declared border "security zone."

Baz assails Israeli 'gimmicks'

(Continued from page 1)

seeing an isolated Israel, rather a positive Israel," Baz said.

He ruled out a visit by Mubarak to Israel soon. Speculation on such a visit erupted after the Egyptian president offered in two interviews to go to Israel if that would lead to the resolution of the Palestinian issue.

Baz said that while Egypt had no "objections... inhibitions" about holding contacts with Israel or any other party in the interest of peace, the government did not believe in "ceremonial meetings."

"At this point, it is not in the interest of parties to have a (summit) meeting just to argue a point here or there. This is being done through regular channels," Baz said.

"For a meeting between the president and the Israeli prime minister or any other high-ranking Israeli official to take place and become fruitful, we must

witness before holding the meeting the realisation of meaningful and tangible progress on the road to peace," he added.

"We believe it is Israel's turn to reciprocate and to take a similar (flexible) position that would allow the negotiations to start," Baz said referring to the PLO's moderate stance. "Israel is well-advised to accept entering negotiations. Israel should accept to recognise and co-exist with the Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

Speaking on other issues, Baz said that he expected Mubarak to visit the United States in the first half of 1989 to hold talks with Bush.

Asked about recent attempts to reconcile Egypt and Syria, Baz said that while there was no objection to improving relations with Damascus, Egypt refused any preconditions attached to resuming diplomatic ties.

DUBAI — Iran's release of a jailed Briton is the first fruit of renewed ties with London but Teheran is under pressure to do more to cement relations with the outside world, according to Western diplomats in the Gulf.

Since the August ceasefire in the Gulf war, Teheran has moved fast to reopen doors which were slammed after the 1979 revolution and during its eight-year war with Iraq.

Iran has renewed diplomatic ties with France, Canada and Britain and has professed the olive branch to Arab Gulf states which gave varying degrees of support to Iraq during the war.

The diplomats said this tendency to expect the worst of Iran was reflected most recently after the crash of a Pan Am airliner in Scotland Dec. 21

when an anonymous caller told Western news agencies that a little-known group linked to Iran was responsible.

Iranian officials moved quickly to deny this and affirmed that Iran stood against terrorism.

Britain and Iran said Nicola's release was a major step forward in relations, but diplomats said Iran still faced a problem of credibility in the eyes of Western and neighbouring Arab states.

"They are having difficulty living down their past," said one Western diplomat.

The diplomats said this tendency to expect the worst of Iran was reflected most recently after the crash of a Pan Am airliner in Scotland Dec. 21

continued split in the government between those who wish to come out of isolation and those who wish to sustain the ideals of the revolution, diplomats said.

"There is still a little pushing and shoving going on in Tehran. The jury is still out," said a Western diplomat.

In the Gulf, Saudi Arabia cut ties with Iran last April after accusing it of enemy-like acts.

Tehran's relations with some other Gulf states were severely strained by attacks on their shipping during the war and by suggestions that Iran was linked to sabotage attempts in Bahrain and Kuwait.

But last week members of the Gulf Cooperation Council

(GCC), grouping Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, made it clear they wanted better relations with Iran.

When all the diplomatic niceties are resolved, the focus returns to deadlocked peace talks with Iraq.

While the guns on the Gulf front have been silent for more than four months, they are still in place and could be rapidly brought into action should the fragile ceasefire break down.

For those in power in the region and many nations beyond its borders, the thought of preventing a renewed Gulf war is a major spur to fostering relations with Iran.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME ONE

21:10

Beauty and the Beast

News in English

Feature film

22:30

Fair



PRINCE HASSAN VISITS GHQ: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday visited the Jordanian Armed Forces Headquarters where he was received by Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb, a number of his aides, and the Armed Forces inspector general. Prince Hassan discussed with Abu Taleb matters of concern to the Armed Forces (Petra photo)



Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday chairs a meeting of the committee for the development of the Jordan Valley (Petra photo)

Committee discusses development of touristic sites in Jordan Valley

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday chaired a committee meeting on the protection of the environment and development of touristic sites in the Jordan Valley.

The committee meeting, which was held at Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), discussed the progress on recommendations made in earlier meetings of the committee and discussed the recommendations of the national development meeting which was held in Amman in November under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein.

The committee introduced a new executive recommendation aimed at dealing with environmental problems and allocated responsibilities to different departments to continue the studies on the relevant issues and present solutions.

The projects reviewed by the committee dealt with establishing national parks and serviced picnic areas in the Jordan Valley with a view to providing maximum basic services to the public.

The committee reviewed a

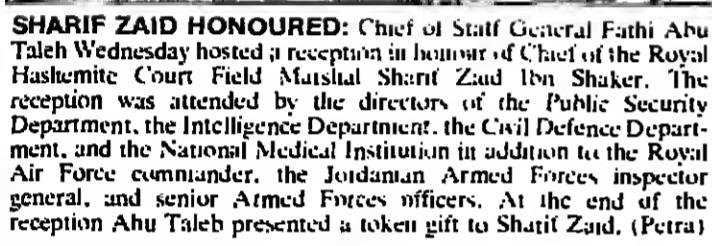
dealing with problems of natural mature which attracts flies and is a nuisance to the public.

The committee also recommended a comprehensive study of the areas visited by the public in the Jordan Valley, with a view to providing these areas with waste disposal services and developing the area touristically.

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for the end of January 1989.

The draft law to protect the area from pollution as a result of discarded plastic waste, solid and liquid garbage left by visitors, as well as

QUEEN OPENS CULTURAL SEASON: Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday opened a seven-day plastic art season — 1988 at the Royal Cultural Centre. The season displays more than 200 pieces of art including paintings, ceramics, and graphics. It also includes several pieces of art by Their Royal Highnesses Princess Alia, Princess Wijdan Ali and Princess Fahrulnisa Zaid. Present at the opening ceremony was Minister of Culture and National Heritage Dr. Mohammad Hammouri, the ministry's secretary general and senior officials, in addition to a number of artists. The minister termed the season as an event designed to bolster and consolidate the cultural and artistic movement in Jordan. (Petra)



SHARIF ZAID HONORED: Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb Wednesday hosted a reception in honour of Chief of the Royal Hashemite Court Field Marshal Sharif Zaid bin Shaker. The reception was attended by the directors of the Public Security Department, the Intelligence Department, the Civil Defence Department, and the National Medical Institution in addition to the Royal Air Force commander, the Jordanian Armed Forces inspector general, and senior Armed Forces officers. At the end of the reception Abu Taleb presented a token gift to Sharif Zaid. (Petra)

Cabinet approves raising volume of trade with Iraq

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The

council of ministers Wednesday approved of minutes issued by its joint Jordanian-Iraqi Higher Committee meeting which was held in Baghdad from Dec. 14 to Dec. 15, under the co-chairmanship of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai and Iraqi First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan.

The committee agreed on raising the volume of exchanged goods between Iraq and Jordan to \$800 million in 1989. It decided to raise the annual quota of ambassador to India.

Hindawi to head higher council of education

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The

council of ministers Wednesday announced the formation of the Higher Council of Education which is to be chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi.

The council which passes decisions on all matters related to universities and community colleges will include as members, the following: minister of Higher Education who will also be deputy chairman, minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, president of the Civil Service Commission, secretary general of the Higher Council for Science and Technology, president of the Yarmouk

University, secretary general of the Ministry of Planning, secretary general of the Ministry of Education, director of education at the Jordanian Armed Forces, director of education at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), director general of the Department of Statistics, dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Jordan, director general of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, Dr. Ishaq Al Farhan, Dr. Rima Khalil, Dr. Victor Billich, Dr. Amal Bakir, Ms. Nabilah Wahbeh, and the director of the Curricula Department at the Ministry of Education.

CARTOGRAPHY GRADUATES: A group of students graduated Wednesday from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC) after completing a 27 month training course in cartography. The 14 students, mostly from Bahrain, were trained in drawing maps with the help of topographic surveys, aerial photography. They also took courses in English, mathematics, and underwent field training. The centre's director, Oqlah Dachmat, presented diplomas and gifts to the graduates at a ceremony attended by a number of guests. (Petra)

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

An art exhibition by Friends of Plastic Art in Gulf countries at the National Gallery.

The youth's art exhibition which displays 101 paintings showing the different aspects of social life in Jordan at the Spanish Cultural Centre.

An exhibition of works by Contemporary Arab Artists at Al Wasit Art Gallery.

An exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Farouk Lambaz at Alia Art Gallery — 5:30 p.m.

The Jordanian plastic art exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

POETRY RECITAL

A poetry recital by the Arab poet Abdul Rahman Al Aboudi at Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation — 6:00 p.m.

FILMS

Chinese films "Beijing Kebabs" and "The Lover" are shown Thursday and Friday respectively at the Royal Cultural Centre — 7:00 p.m.

A feature film entitled "On the Water Front" at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.

Yarmouk to receive JD 2m housing loan from SSC

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) is to lend Yarmouk University JD 2 million to help construct residential quarters for university staff, according to an agreement signed here Wednesday.

The agreement was signed by

SSC Director General Mahdi Al Farhan and University President Mohamad Hamdan.

Earlier this year Yarmouk University awarded a contract to a local company to start constructing residential quarters for female students at the cost of JD 4,405 million, and the project was set to be completed in 700 days.

The project also entails buildings for services and utilities, courts for sports activities — such as volleyball, basketball, a tennis court and others.



Social Security Corporation Director General Mahdi Al Farhan and Yarmouk University President Mohammad Hamdan Wednesday sign a loan agreement in Amman. (Petra photo)

The SSC grants loans for housing projects, especially those to benefit government employees and citizens employed in the private sector who are covered by the SSC laws, as well as universities and organisations.

In October Farhan told a press conference in Amman that the SSC has spent JD 37 million in benefits to 130,000 individuals, out of a total of 500,000 who are covered by the SSC, and made investments in various sectors and projects totalling JD 82 million.

Beneficiaries from the SSC programmes get pension when they reach the age of retirement, for occupational injuries, sickness and disability.

The SSC, which started off in 1980 with a JD 5 million capital has now accumulated JD 250 million and out of the JD 82 million that went into investments, JD 26 million are now benefiting local industries and JD 24 million have been invested in tourist projects.

Students taking vocational courses begin exams

AMMAN (J.T.) — A total of 8,839 students taking vocational courses at the Tawjihi level in government schools of Jordan, Wednesday sat for the first session of the mid-year examinations set by the Ministry of Education.

The director of the ministry's Examinations Department, Abdul Rahman Shubailat, said the examinations begin daily at nine in the morning to give ample time to the students to reach their assigned halls.

On Thursday a total of 58,618 students will take the first session of Tawjihi examinations in the scientific and literary streams, in addition to the vocational streams which include nursing, commercial, agricultural, industrial

streams and hotel management.

Earlier this month the Ministry of Education announced that students in the occupied West Bank schools will take the General Secondary School Certificate (Tawjihi) examinations only once and at the end of the current 1988-1989 scholastic year in June 1989.

Schools in the occupied lands have been closed for more than a year because of the uprising.

NEW MAP OF JORDAN: The Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC) has published a map of the Kingdom for public use at a scale of 1/750,000 showing Jordan's tourist sites in addition to the plans of major cities in the country. The RJGC deems the recently published map as "indispensable" to tourists and visitors. Copies of the map can be obtained from the RJGC at Jubeiba, near the Ministry of Higher Education.

Department of Customs issues new regulations for foreign cars

AMMAN (Petra) — Cars with foreign licence plates brought in by their owners for temporary stay in Jordan should abide by a set of regulations as of the first of January 1989, in accordance with new instructions issued by the Department of Customs.

The department Director General Adel Qudah said that the instructions were issued to conform to the council of ministers' recent ban on the importation of cars for one year. Qudah said from now on cars with non-Jordanian plates will be required to prove that they had been registered in their own country, with a valid licence, an international transit manifest issued by a recognised automobile club and a local insurance covering their stay in Jordan.

Cars with no licence plates or with no valid licence would be referred to customs for the required procedures. "Should these cars fail to show an international transit manifest, they will be allowed to stay for one week only," Qudah said.

He said Jordanians bringing in such cars should have them registered under their own names, they should carry a work permit from the country where the car had been registered, with a valid licence with their names appearing on the international transit manifest, otherwise the car will be referred to the customs authorities to deal with it, Qudah noted.

He said the new instructions exempt Saudi cars from international transit manifest if driven by Saudi nationals, otherwise only three months would be allowed for the driver to stay in Jordan.

Non-Jordanians bringing in such cars must prove that they are registered under their names and they should be residents of the countries which issued licence

plates to the cars in question.

If the visitor is Egyptian then the Egyptian-Jordanian agreement would be implemented.

Lebanese visitors bringing in cars with valid licences and international transit manifest, will be allowed to stay for three months but if the driver of a Lebanese car is not Lebanese, the car would be referred to the customs authorities to deal with it, Qudah said.

He said the new instructions exempt Saudi cars from international transit manifest if driven by Saudi nationals, otherwise only three months would be allowed for the driver to stay in Jordan. Should any cars under any of the previously mentioned categories leave the country for a while and re-enter within one month they would be allowed to stay one more week.

Ministry studies market needs for frozen meat

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The Ministry of Supply has not taken a final decision on the importation of frozen meat and is currently conducting a detailed study on the local market needs of this commodity, according to Ministry Secretary General Abdullah Al Hawamdeh.

The ministry, he said, is studying the meat situation in Jordan as a whole to maintain a balance between local production and imports. It hopes to stimulate the animal husbandry and increase animal wealth.

Reports in the local press based on hints by ministry officials said that the government was contemplating the idea of halting fresh meat imports and substituting it with frozen meat, while also contemplating the import of additional amounts of fish from Oman and boosting the sale of locally produced poultry meat.

Hawamdeh said that Jordan must have sufficient number of qualified stores to deal with the frozen meat for which extra care must be taken to ensure it would not be mixed with the fresh meat.

On the existing centres and hatcheries that sell imported fresh meat, Hawamdeh told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the ministry is currently looking for a way to help their owners to

resume as of Jan. 8.

To cover the temporary shortage of fresh meat, he said, the Ministry of Supply has provided the military and civil consumer corporations with additional amounts of poultry meat.

Hawamdeh said the Ministry of Supply had reached agreement with the local food merchants not to raise the prices of foodstuff without first consulting with the ministry, which is currently conducting a study on the prices of dried milk upon request of the importers.

Hawamdeh told Petra that the Ministry of Supply stores are resuming the process of selling barley and hran now at subsidised prices, a process which had been undertaken previously by the Jordan Cooperative Organisation.

He said the ministry will provide the animal feed from now on in accordance with the number of the farm animals owned by each farmer.

HAJ HASSAN MEETS UAE ENVOY: Transport and Telecommunications Minister Khaled Al Haj Hassan Wednesday discussed with UAE Ambassador in Amman Mohammad Jasem Shukur cooperation in the fields of transport and telecommunications. (Petra)

CDD teams praised for saving tourists from floods in Petra

AMMAN (J.T.) — Civil Defence Department (CDD) teams were praised by foreign embassies in Amman for rescuing seven foreign tourists besieged by floods and snow in the ancient Nabatean city of Petra during the storm over the past three days.

Other CDD teams saved seven families in the Jizan area near Qatraneh being cut off by rain water and snow, according to reports in the local press Wednesday.

The reports said that the rain water flooded many homes in Jizan, Mumia, and Bathan near Karak and the CDD men removed the residents to safer ground.

GUVS to contribute JD 40,000 to Madaba rehabilitation centre

MADABA (Petra) — The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUFS) will contribute JD 40,000 to a projected centre for the rehabilitation of handicapped people which is sponsored by the Saladdin Charitable Society, according to an announcement here Wednesday.

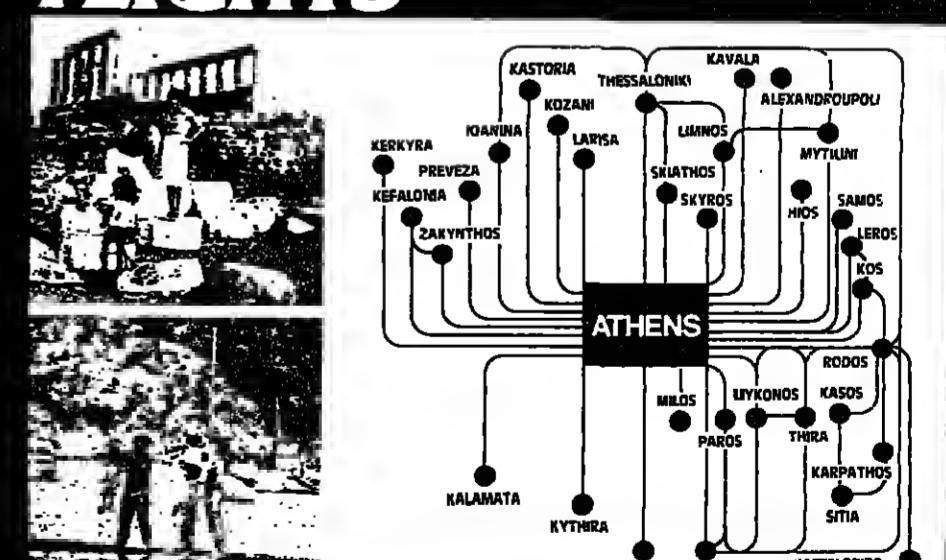
The announcement, made by the society president, said that the Ministry of Public Works and Housing has now completed work on designs and engineering plans for the project, the feasibility studies of which were carried out

training, and the whole project is expected to cost JD 120,000.

Referring to other activities, the society president said a dress-making workshop is now operational and typing lessons are being given free of charge to young women from needy families. A number of scholarships have also been awarded to poor students at community colleges.

In addition, he said, the society has provided a health clinic to offer treatment to the handicapped children and has opened a library for students.

OLYMPIC'S WORLDWIDE FLIGHTS



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Sunday	17:20	21:35

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An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.

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Israel's ostrichism

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak may have gambled and lost over his insistence that his proposed visit to Israel be made contingent on Israel's acceptance to engage the PLO in talks leading to an overall settlement of the Palestinian conflict. But this is besides the point. What is even more relevant is that Cairo is putting all its weight behind the PLO as the principal interlocutor to any negotiations on the resolution of the Palestinian question. Equally important is the fact that Egypt is drifting further and further away from the Camp David accords as basis for future negotiations on the Arab-Israeli conflict. All such signals from Egypt lend added force to the credentials of Egypt as the heart and spirit of the Arab World and whose return to the Arab fold and the Arab League must become an Arab national request.

Moreover, Mubarak's conditional offer to visit Israel is clearly due to the worldwide recognition that Tel Aviv is seeking to throw red herrings in the path of the emerging international mainstream on the future course of the Arab-Israeli talks. Israel's continued ostrichism in the face of new realities in the Middle East can fool no one, not even the Israeli people themselves. There is no way Israel's aging leadership can turn the political clock back. The sooner they come to terms with the recent facts in the Middle Eastern theatre, the better for all the parties concerned.

That is why Mubarak's conditional offer to travel to Tel Aviv is sound and well appreciated worldwide. In so doing President Mubarak has served Israel with notice that the false baits that it is offering to the Arab countries cannot and will not reverse the tide that has picked up momentum in the wake of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's utterance of the magic words in Geneva few weeks ago — i.e., acceptance of the U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and Israel's right to exist and the rejection of terrorism in all its forms. Thus Israel's delaying tactics can mean only one thing at the end: much important time and opportunities would go down the drain and Israel's talk about new peace overtures based on a modified version of Camp David accords would remain much ado about nothing.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

THE Arab-Israeli conflict entered a new phase with the announcement by the PLO of a Palestinian state and its acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Al Ra'i Arabic daily said in an editorial Wednesday. The paper said that the announcement was coupled with a reaffirmation of the right of all states in the Middle East to live in peace and security, thus creating an opportune moment for the U.S. to announce its long-awaited dialogue with the PLO. All these developments, the paper noted, have paved the way for an international peace conference which sooner or later is bound to convene with the participation of all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In view of this situation, Arab leaders are bound to maintain and strengthen their consultations and coordination of policies with the PLO and Jordan to maintain the peace momentum and to deal with any eventualities. Close coordination among the Arabs is needed now also in view of Israel's plans to launch a world-wide campaign to thwart the PLO's quest for peace, the paper said.



Rabah — Al Ra'i

Writing in Al Ra'i daily Wednesday the newspaper's editor Rakan Al Majali paid tribute to the efforts of the Greater Amman Municipality and the Civil Defence Department in dealing with the effects of rain and snow in and around the capital over the past three days. But the writer says that the non-stop rains over a three-day period revealed certain faults and deficiencies mainly connected with the designs of streets and roundabouts, which tend to obstruct efforts to drain away rain water and keep the streets open for traffic. The writer cites as an example the Interior Ministry roundabout which he says was flooded with water causing a traffic jam, which indicates clearly that the designers failed to take into account certain measures to help drain the water away from the streets. He says many streets, especially in the western districts of Amman, were blocked with snow which could have easily been dealt with by the use of salt that comes out as a by-product at the Potash plants.

Al Dastour daily wrote Wednesday on Israel's total isolation from the rest of the world community which prompted Tel Aviv to opt for even stricter policies and more extremist stands. By taking this adamant position vis-a-vis peace and talks with the PLO, Israel believes that it can show the world that it truly wants peace, said the paper. It said by presenting to the world the Camp David accord as the only means of arriving at peace with the Arabs and solving the Palestine problem, Israel has proved that it has become bankrupt of ideas on the political scene, and incapable to deal with the ever escalating uprising in areas under its control.

Sawt Al Shaah tackled the current moves within the Arab World in support of the Palestinians and the PLO in their quest to reach a durable peace and restore Arab rights. Following the historic proclamation of the Palestinian state and the PLO's acceptance of U.N. Security Council resolutions there can be no alternative to concerted Arab action that can come from an Arab summit, the paper noted. It said that backing for the Palestinians is now needed more than at any time in the past in view of Israel's planned campaign to abort the PLO's moves towards peace and the on-going PLO-U.S. dialogue that would lead to that end.

Playing the right diplomatic cards

By P.V. Vivekanand

WITH Kenya's decision to restore diplomatic relations with Israel, the number of black African countries maintaining full ties with the Jewish state has gone up to eight; that is, not to speak of South Africa. The Kenyan decision, which based itself on the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) recognition of Israel's "right to exist" and what is perceived as improved chances for peace in the Middle East, is indeed Nairobi's own affair. But, for us in the Middle East, there are two ways of looking at the development.

First of all, an important African country like Kenya resuming full ties with Israel signifies the extent of inroads that the Jewish state has made into Africa and reflects another Israeli diplomatic gain.

Well, it would have been presumptuous on the part of the Arab World to expect African countries to continue to maintain diplomatic isolation of Israel, particularly when we take into consideration the fact that the reason for African countries to break ties with the Jewish state was its occupation of African territory; Egypt's Sinai. If anything, the return of Sinai to Egypt in 1980 should have triggered a wave to resumption of formal ties between African states and Israel. Obviously, it was Arab influence as well as many African countries' realisation of the injustice done to the Palestinians that thwarted such a course of events.

Taken as an individual case, it is no surprise that Kenya resumed ties with Israel since it was well known for decades that there were strong informal links between Nairobi and Tel Aviv. The most outstanding pointer was the facilities that Kenya offered to Israel during the Entebbe hijack affair in 1975.

On the other hand, the Kenyan decision to restore ties with Israel means another important African country having direct conduit to the Jewish state, though it might be wishful thinking to imagine Kenya playing any meaningful role as a mediator between the Arabs and Israel — much more heavy-weight countries have tried and given up in the face of Israel's intransigence and one-track mind when it comes to return of occupied Arab territories.

It is however strange that Kenya, which professes support for Arab causes, failed to recognise the newly-declared State of Palestine while extending full diplomatic ties with Israel. One wonders where the logic lies in Nairobi's contention that the PLO's acceptance of the "existence" of Israel has removed all obstacles in Kenya's desire to renew its recognition of the Zionist state without having to extend the same diplomatic gesture to the State of

Palestine.

So, where does it leave the Arabs? Upset because another African state resumed ties with Israel? Upset because it offers yet another diplomatic channel to Israel to pursue peace, now that it has been resoundingly recorded that the only means to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict is through peaceful, civilised, meaningful negotiations?

Within the context of diplomatic relations, it is not important in itself whether Israel secures more and more international recognition as a state. What is paramount is how to make the best out of the situation towards advancing the cause of peace in the Middle East, and how to play the cards right and bring about a change in the apparent Israeli conviction that its military might is the answer to its problems, "security" and otherwise.

In light of the emerging trend in international thinking and regional conflicts towards leaning on diplomacy as the means to settle disputes, one cannot but help notice an approach that makes allowances for the fact that formal links between two sides are the first step towards developing a dialogue and, if played right, diplomatic relations could be an ace in the hole. The Arab World is not short of friends in the Third World and their relations, or the lack of ties, with Israel could be a trump that the Arabs could use to pile additional pressure on the Jewish state to listen to the voice of reason.

Perhaps, one could say that Nairobi's decision was premature since Israel has not reciprocated the moderation and realism reflected in the PLO's peace strategy based on a two-state solution. On the contrary, the very foundation for the coalition in power in Israel is rejection of an independent Palestinian state and refusal to deal with the PLO. One could have wished that Kenya or any other country sympathetic towards the Arab cause could have held out the promise of diplomatic relations in return for a thaw in Israel's intransigence and defiance over calls for an international peace conference.

That raises the issue of relations between the Soviet Union and Israel. For all practical purposes, the Israeli leadership appears to believe that a Soviet decision to resume ties with Israel is just round the corner. The overt anxiety that the Israelis showed in extending aid to the victims of the Dec. 7 earthquake in Armenia also seems to have added another solid stone in the careful scenario that the Israeli officialdom is building; that is, of course, not demeaning the humanitarian element in offering aid to victims of a natural disaster, whether in the Soviet Union or in the Fiji Islands or

whether the aid comes from Israel or New Zealand. At the same time, we cannot brush aside the fact that Israel's

main aim in prodding Moscow into resuming ties is increased Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. Successive Soviet-leaders have held out on this for decades. But a significant increase in the number of Soviet Jews leaving the Soviet Union is evident these days. It might be premature to judge what it means; whether it is a result of the "glasnost" and "perestroika" introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev or of a tacit Soviet-Israeli agreement. In either case, the net result is simple: Israel might be getting what it hoped for — a gradual increase in Soviet emigration. The only problem that lies here for Israel is the lack of direct air links with the Soviet Union to ensure that no Jewish emigrant escapes the Israeli Union. Obviously, one can understand the considerations behind the Israeli concern and anxiety to launch direct Soviet-Israeli flights. It will not be surprising to hear soon that the two sides have reached agreement on this issue, thus taking care of one of Israel's most important preoccupations shrouded in its quest for diplomatic ties with Moscow.

Such a scenario — with Israel gaoling in more ways than one while the Middle East peace process remains grounded because of its intransigence — does indeed carry a bitter taste. Given the positions declared by Israel over its intentions to handle the Palestinian problem, it is very disturbing course of events, particularly that there would be little incentive for the Israelis to bow to international pressure spearheaded by the Soviet Union and accept a just and fair settlement to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Furthermore, incidents like the recent hijacking of a Soviet plane where Israel extended the magnanimous gesture of promptly returning the aircraft and hijackers to the Soviet Union are specific instances that point to a dedicated Israeli desire to curry favor with Moscow. Such calculated moves did have their desired impact starting from the profound public thanks that the Soviet leadership conveyed to the Israelis.

From official Soviet statements and declarations, there is little doubt that the Kremlin leadership is aware of the pitfalls in dealing with Israel, and there is no significant shift in Moscow's support for the Arab cause as a matter of principle. But that should not be a self-assurance for the Arabs to take the Soviet Union for granted and divert attention to elsewhere in the international scene while Israel is left free to use its own brand of coercion and conjuring tricks with Moscow and others to suit its own interests without having to produce anything in return to contribute to the peace process.

The writer is the political editor of the Jordan Times.

Bush shows cautious approach on budget, diplomacy

By Michael Gettle

Reuter

WASHINGTON — Confronted by a daunting budget deficit as well as tantalising opportunities to promote Middle East peace and U.S.-Soviet accord, President-elect George Bush says caution will be his watchword in the White House.

"I'm one who always has been a little bit cautious, and yet I don't want to seem negative," Bush said at a recent news conference when asked what he thought of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's dramatic pledge to cut Soviet military forces by 500,000 men and 10,000 tanks.

Would Bush consider something similar? "I am interested in progress but I want it to be prudent," he replied.

On the Middle East, too, the man who is about to take over from Ronald Reagan expressed a meticulously careful view of possibilities for opening a U.S. dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) — just before Reagan approved that his aide said.

As these and other episodes suggest, caution and prudence are likely to be familiar descriptors in the presidency of Bush, which begins with a gala inaugural on Jan. 20.

That will go as well for the domestic problems, and especially the budget deficits now running

about \$150 billion a year, which will get even higher priority than the array of challenges on the diplomatic front.

"I can't imagine anything that would dominate the first 100 days of the administration more than the deficit," said one senior Bush aide who is slated for a key White House job.

Bush's prudent style of government will stand in sharp contrast to the unbridled enthusiasm Reagan exuded in pushing his conservative, super-patriot's vision of the world.

Restraint is characteristic of the president-elect, who considers himself "a practical man" and has spent the weeks since his Nov. 8 election victory over Democrat Michael Dukakis reaching out to political adversaries — including Dukakis — and reassuring U.S. allies.

"I'm not much for the airy and abstract," he has said. "I like what works. I'm not a mystic."

Reagan administration hollers.

While Reagan's style was to make grand moves and charm the public, he often upset U.S. allies, who bristled over what they regarded as inadequate consultation on issues that affected their security. A notable example was his near-agreement with Gor-



George Bush

I'm vice president of the United States and I'll support this administration until I become president of the United States. I've done that for seven years and 11 months and I'm not going to change now.

don't yearn to lead a crusade." This prudence has been underscored by his decision to staff the top levels of his administration with familiar professional government figures such as close friend James Baker as secretary of state.

Brent Scowcroft as national security adviser. Richard Darman as budget director and many

Bush at the 1986 Reykjavik summit to wipe out U.S. and Soviet long-range nuclear missile arsenals.

Ties with Moscow

Bush, by contrast, says a NATO summit to establish alliance arms control strategy must precede any summit between himself and Gorbachev. Bush insiders say a Bush-Gorbachev summit is not likely before the second half of the next year.

"There obviously are opportunities in the relationship with the Soviet Union," one senior Bush aide said. "George certainly has a sense of the reality of that opportunity."

But this aide emphasised that Bush also sees "the problems associated with over-optimism." He argued that the vice president "deserves credit for the self-discipline for not feeling obliged to just shove things out right now for the sake of getting headlines."

It was not immediately clear how Bush intended to proceed in the Middle East but, to some extent, his manoeuvring room was restricted by Reagan's sudden Dec. 14 decision to clear the way for official U.S. talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Bush quickly expressed pleasure with that decision, keeping to his loyal lieutenant stance right to the end.

"I'm vice president of the United States and I'll support this administration until I become president of the United States," he has said. "I've done that for seven years and 11 months and I'm not going to change now."

His aides say they expected he would adopt the same

approach to the fast-changing Middle East situation that he is

pledging toward Moscow — to get his team together for what he calls "a hard Bush administration look at it."

Whatever evolves, Bush aides say he will not follow Reagan's practice of delegating authority to develop policy.

"The vice president clearly has in mind a foreign policy agenda," one senior aide told Reuters.

"George Bush will set that agenda personally and publicise that agenda personally."

On the budget deficit, America's top domestic issue, Bush has vowed to reduce red ink without

raising taxes or cutting the social security pension programme — a feat many economists say is impossible.

The challenge is complicated by a growing sense that a massive infusion of government money will be needed to shore up America's ailing savings and loan industry. Some nuclear safety experts also say it will cost as much as \$50 billion to overhaul leaky and dangerous atomic weapons production plants.

On top of those expenditures Bush hopes to step up government aid for education and child care and beef up enforcement of environmental laws.

OPEN FORUM

A choked constitution

AMERICA has been, and remains, the great constitutional laboratory for the entire world, as quoted by Joseph Magnet, a professor in University of Ottawa, Canada (Time magazine, Jan. 6, 1987).

Indeed a certainty until the influential Jews choked some American policy makers. A very tremendous mistake which marred America's credibility as champion of human rights and the world's credo of democracy.

Why should the majority of American people be misled by a handful of greedy politicians?

What would the framers of the American constitution feel, knowing the nation they built is now the main advocate of oppression?

As in the speech of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, delivered in Geneva, it was clearly emphasised, he sought peace. Abjuring terrorism, accepting U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 what more is expected from a man invoking a free nation for his people?

The main factor antagonising the PLO peace initiative is the stubbornness of the Israeli prime minister and the tolerance of the U.S. administration.

Bill A. Cacchiano
Amman, Jordan

Herculean task awaits winner of Salvadorean elections

By Douglas Grant Mine

The Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR. El Salvador — This long-suffering Central American nation has embarked on a presidential campaign against a backdrop of surging political murder. The winter's prize is to preside over economic stagnation and a stalemate civil war.

One new factor is the political left, which is running candidates for the first time since the mid-1970s. Leftist leaders

A holiday season of debt and hungry children

By George Gedda
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When Pan Am Flight 103 crashed last week, claiming more than 280 lives, the reaction was one of virtual universal horror. But the death toll was only a small fraction of the number of children under 5 who die almost unnoticed each day from hunger and disease worldwide.

If Christmas day was typical, about 38,300 such children from poor countries died, according to new estimates released by the United Nations' Children's Fund.

Put another way, the death toll from the Pan Am flight is equalled every 10 minutes or so in terms of children aged 5 and under.

These figures are derived from UNICEF's calculation that 14 million children under age 5 died in 1987, partly because so many countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa, impoverished by debt and other factors, are cutting back on social services.

UNICEF Executive Director James Grant said last week that 3 million of these children died last year "because they didn't have 50 cents worth of vaccine in them."

Poor transfer to rich

The situation apparently has changed little and may have even worsened in 1988. The World Bank reported last week that poorer countries are transferring their wealth to richer nations at record levels this year — 50 per cent more than in 1987.

The bank said the 17 most highly indebted countries of the Third World will give wealthy countries \$31.1 billion more than they receive, triple the amount of 1983. Crushing debt repayments mean less money left over for imports of basic human necessities such as food and medicine.

No region has been harder hit than Latin America, where per capita income is 8 per cent below 1980 levels.

The inter-American dialogue, a gathering of concerned citizens from throughout the hemisphere, said in a recent report the social consequences of Latin America's prolonged depression have been multiplied.

The people of Latin America have seen their wages fall and their jobs disappear, their housing, schools, hospitals and other public service have deteriorated and they have endured food short-

tages and mounting street crime. "Financially strapped governments have been unable to address such fundamental social problems as the vast gap between rich and poor, the deep poverty of rural areas and city slums, widespread malnutrition and high rates of infant mortality," the report said.

U.S. President-elect Bush seems to be aware of the problems that the \$1.3-trillion U.S. debt burden is causing Third World countries. Since his election, Bush has met with the presidents of Mexico and Argentina and the incoming president of Venezuela — all countries where foreign debt is a major political and economic issue.

Ease debt burden

Two days before release of the UNICEF report, Bush left the impression that his administration is likely to ask commercial banks to ease the debt burden of developing countries.

Bush said the issue "should be subject to a major review which will include not just the treasury but our national security people because we've got enormous problems, particularly in our own hemisphere, on Third World debt."



Let her eat!

U.S. policy on the debt issue was spelled out in September 1985 by then Treasury Secretary and now Secretary of State-designate James A. Baker III.

Baker's proposals for restoring growth in Latin America and elsewhere call for a combination of economic reforms in the de-

itor countries and new public and private lending to meet their capital needs.

But, as the inter-American dialogue report points out, Latin American governments have lost confidence in the Baker approach because it has not produced the resources it promised.

Milton Nascimento, Brazil's divine voice

By Miriam Jordan
Reuter

SAO PAULO — Brazilians say that if God sang, it would be with the voice of Milton Nascimento.

Nascimento's countrymen consider him one of a divine trio of musicians, alongside singer-poets Chico Buarque and Caetano Veloso.

His music is a fusion of samba, jazz and pop, ringing with everything from the beatles to the sound of church bells, and it brings people to tears.

"Even if people don't understand the words in Portuguese they are stirred by the feeling transmitted in my songs," Nascimento recently told Reuters in Sao Paulo.

With his unique harmony of voice, melody and emotion Nascimento has won the admiration of prominent artists and personalities the world over.

Paul Simon, Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Sting have joined him on stage and in albums. Alvin Ailey, David Parsons and the French Ballet have invited him to write music for their choreography. In Paris he dined with President and

Mrs. Francois Mitterrand. In 1989 he will add China and the Soviet Union to the long list of countries where he has played.

This year, after a 120-day tour which took him to 16 countries in Asia, Europe and North America, he is back home with a new record and show.

In Sao Paulo a full house sang and swayed to his 105-minute performance. From start to finish the audience seemed under the spell of the black man in white while he sang love ballads, poetry and odes to the poor.

When not strumming a guitar, his long hands danced in the air to follow the music. Rhythm demanding, he got up and wiggled a few samba steps. And at the end the audience's tireless applause brought him back for two encores.

The show was based on his latest album, "Miltons" — literally "1,000 tons" in Portuguese which has been rated one of his best. Herbie Hancock's jazz piano and Nana Vasconcelos' vanguard percussion accompany him on the record.

"It's simple. You hear the piano, the voice, the guitar. All the sounds are in the fore-

ground," Nascimento said. As his voice climbs to high notes with ease, it resonates and reaches what a critic termed "gigantes never before explored" by a singer.

The voice is so angelic that it makes it all the more ironic that at the age of 10 little Milton failed voice class at school.

He was born 45 years ago in Rio de Janeiro and adopted by a white couple in the town of Treze Pontas in the state of Minas Gerais. They nurtured his musical talent from the start, giving him a harmonica when he was five. At 14 he got a guitar, which he hasn't put down since.

He made his debut with "travessia," for which he won the 1967 international song festival in Rio de Janeiro. But his career really took off in 1975 when American saxophonist Wayne Shorter invited him to record with him.

Milton is his 26th album. Amnesty International invited him to be the Brazilian representative of the "Human Rights Now" concert which took place in Sao Paulo in October.

He dedicated his performance to Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga, one of Brazil's leading human rights campaigners. This year he and Casaldaliga wrote a musical mass to celebrate the centenary of the abolition of slavery in Brazil.

The mass, "Missa Dos Quilombos," brings African motifs into a Catholic ritual about blacks and freedom. In 1989 Nascimento will perform the mass at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris and in Barcelona and New York.

Denmark is his favourite country outside Brazil and he goes back there every year whether he performs or not.

"I'm crazy about Denmark. When I was a kid I used to... tell my buddies Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales. I've always had something about magic and fantasy and dreamed of going there."

He said his biggest thrill was to be chosen by Sting to open the Scandinavian pop festival near Copenhagen last summer.

What with all the recent travelling and popularity, the usually timid Nascimento seems to be coming out of his shell — or his cap.

He has shed his traditional denim overalls for chic silk white shirts, trousers and jacket in his shows. But he hasn't surrendered his cap, his eternal trademark.

He recalls with amusement why he began wearing a cap:

"I was very late for an Alvin Ailey performance. My long, curly hair was a mess; it was impossible to comb. So a friend gave me a cap to tuck it beneath."

"Then people said I looked charming and I never took it off."

The revival of an ancestral art: stained glass windows

THE traditional stained glass window is an assemblage of pieces of coloured glass, held together by grooved lines of lead which act as a framework and follow the outlines of the design.

Above a certain size, the excessive weight, in particular, can present a risk for the solidity of the panels, which no longer conform to present-day safety standards for public buildings. Should monumental art therefore be deprived of its most dazzling means of expression?

In Toulouse, Michel and Daniel Bataillon, the very young artists of the "Atelier du Vitrail d'Art

d'Art" (Art Stained-Glass Workshop) were not resigned to this situation. They had the idea of assembling antique coloured or opal glass by sticking it "glass onto glass" onto an approved support (a classical sheet of security glass or laminated glass).

In order to apply their idea, which is based on high technology in the way the products and material are made, they thought of the space industry, its experience and its reliability.

Technology Porte du Vent

"Silovitral" is thus the result of collaboration between a small workshop and a basic research laboratory (the Space Studies Centre for Radiation), which is a laboratory belonging to the French National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS), officially ratified by the University of Toulouse and chosen by the French Space Studies Centre (CNES).

This innovation has already been honoured by a monumental creation, the "Porte du Vent," a 25 square metre stained glass window, with 657 pieces of glass and 62 colours, based on a cartoon Marc d'Hamonville. It is on permanent display in the great staircase of the secondary school (CES) in Grenade-sur-Garonne. This is not the first time that the South-West of France, a land of tradition (particularly from the gastronomic point of view) and a tie of modernity (aeronautics, space, electronics, composites, etc...), illustrates the words Louis Pasteur addressed to the students at the Ecole des Beaux Arts (School of Fine Arts) on March 6, 1865: "There are circumstances

chamber where it was exposed to extreme heat and cold, ultraviolet and infrared radiation, and fog and rain.

And this is well and truly stained glass. It respects the fundamental artistic characteristics descended from tradition (with which the workshop is familiar as it is experienced in this field), with classical glass, colouring in the glass and black joints contributing to the composition. But "Silovitral" extends these possibilities. In contrast to the technique using lead, it is here possible to cut out very large arcs, to assemble them edge to edge and to join them with a light-coloured filling.

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A stained glass window from Atelier du Vitrail d'Art

in which I clearly see the possible and desirable alliance of Science and Art, when chemists and physicists can take their places

among you and enlighten you. And it is indeed in this dynamic region of the South-West that the use of computers applied to

mosaics has already opened up the future to this other form of ancestral art.

And it is surely not the last time. The "Second Forum of Arts of the Scientific and Technical World" (FAUST), with its international attendance, its festival of scientific films, its 28 conferences, lectures and discussions, its 12 concerts and 6 exhibitions, was recently held in Toulouse, to present "everything that can make up an interface, between the world of research and technology, on the one hand, and the world of creation and cultural life, on the other."

This revival of the stained-glass window has to be appreciated for its true worth. Its rôle in the development of architecture and decorative art has been fundamental in the West, and particularly in France, which alone owns more old stained glass than the rest of the world. As a precaution against bombing in the Second World War, five bateaux of stained glass, from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, were preserved here.

And the modern stained glass window already reached new heights with the 1990s style and profited from contemporary trends such as Cubism, Expressionism and Abstraction and the best painters are still interested in it — L'actualité en France.

Jacques Baudeneau

Language debate alive and kicking

By Michael Wrong
Reuter

PARIS — For many people the words "French dictation" evoke dreary images of school desks and ink-stained fingers.

But for the 177 finalists who filed nervously into Paris's Chaillet Palace the words were glimmering, holding prospects of prestige France bestows on anyone awarded the rarefied title "champion d'orthographe."

The candidates were mostly professional people determined to prove their love of the French language by taking one of the hardest dictations around.

"The competition attracts an absolutely extraordinary following," says Franc Dumont, its organiser and press spokesman.

"It shows a love of French which can make us pretty optimistic for the future of the French language," he said, acknowledging that few nationalities showed the same narcissistic fascination for their own tongue.

With the bicentennial of the 1789 French Revolution fast approaching, this is a time for unashamed patriotism — which may help explain the growing popularity of competitions like the spelling championship.

The competition has been running for the last three years, with the number of participants and countries steadily increasing.

This year 150,000 people entered the competition, fighting to win a coveted place at the televised finals in Paris last month, where the lucky few struggled with a dry text full of abstruse vocabulary and unexpected conjugations.

Dedicated amateurs

The competition is divided into four categories, according to age, nationality and whether or not participants have a professional involvement in the French language or are merely dedicated amateurs. This year's amateur winner was Michel Toromanoff, a retired engineer from Gentilly, south of Paris.

Although entrants from 13 countries took part, the tournament is as French as the baguette, and is the Gallic equivalent in intellectual terms of the brain-teasing times crossword puzzle.

However, it doesn't look as though the establishment is listening.

Language equals barrier. The language barrier prevented the films from enjoying world-wide distribution, he said. Berni's views sparked an outraged reaction from the conservative daily Le Figaro, which published an open letter from Francophone affairs minister Alain Decaux accusing the filmmaker of biting the band that had fed him.

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French teachers have also turned rebellious.

A schoolteacher's union which carried out a survey of its members' views recently revealed that a huge majority believed French's quirky spelling and grammatical irregularities were an artificial obstacle to understanding and should be simplified.

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How sorry I am, sir, that my admiration for you must now be tinged with pain," concluded the offended minister.

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TA

Features

Tiny South Pacific islands may vanish in future

By Francis Daniel
Reuter

SYDNEY — Tiny Pacific and Indian Ocean islands could vanish as the earth warms up and polar icecaps melt.

Cyclones, storms and floods will batter Australia's coasts. Severe dry spells will transform some of its vast agricultural lands into dustbowls.

Australia and the surrounding region will bear the brunt of the catastrophic climatic changes known as the greenhouse effect, scientists predicted at simultaneous conferences in 10 cities across Australia.

The greenhouse effect is caused by the release of large amounts of carbon dioxide and other gases into the air, mainly from the burning of fossil fuel such as coal and oil, and other industrial activity.

But scientists said international action was still a long way off. Some nations, like the Soviet Union with its large ice-covered wasteland, might find the warming of the atmosphere beneficial.

China, with its vast coal resources, would find it difficult to accept restrictions on the use of fossil fuel needed for its modernisation programme, they said.

A U.S. government report released last month says strategies to reverse the greenhouse effect are not yet available and calls on policymakers to consider ways to adapt to warmer world.

American scientist Stephen Schneider forecast climatic changes in the next century more dramatic than those during the last ice age.

Schneider, of the U.S. National Centre for Atmospheric Research, said temperature increases ranging from 3.5 to 4.5 degrees Celsius would change tidal patterns and raise sea levels by between 0.2 and 1.4 metres.

"A global increase of more than two degrees Celsius above the present is unprecedented in the era of human civilisation," he said.

Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze told the U.N. General Assembly in October that ideological divisions were receding "in the face of the threat of environmental catastrophe."

He warned of "a second front fast approaching and gaining an urgency equal to that of the nuclear and space threat."

"The main concern is that the rate of change will be so fast that natural and social systems will be unable to adapt," he added.

The average temperature during the last ice age — 18,000 years ago — was only five degrees Celsius colder than now.

In a joint research paper, Australian scientist Peter Roy and

John Connell said low-lying island states like the Maldives in the Indian Ocean and Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands and Tokelau in the Pacific would be submerged if the expected rise in the sea level of one metre occurred by 2030.

Other tiny island nations would be eroded and reduced in size, forcing millions of people to seek refuge elsewhere, they said.

The 2030 scenario presented to the conference saw Australians who live in coastal regions washed out of their homes and all major cities hit by severe floods, storms and unpredictable rainfall.

Australia pleaded to the U.N. General Assembly last month for urgent global action against the greenhouse effect.

But scientists said international action was still a long way off. Some nations, like the Soviet Union with its large ice-covered wasteland, might find the warming of the atmosphere beneficial.

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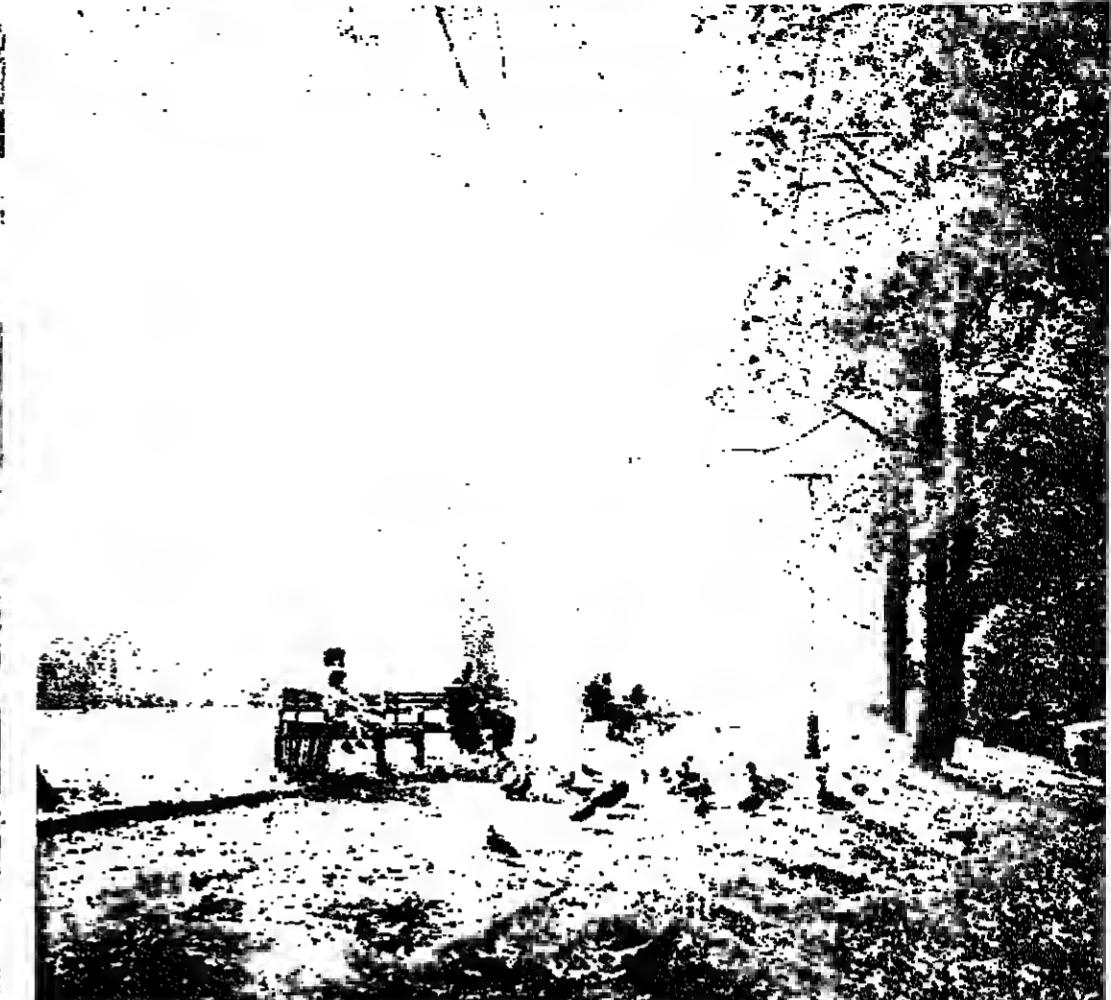
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Parks for the young and the old may be the future of Britain, rather than shipyards



City reflects a greening Britain after the age of heavy industry

By Marcus Eliason
The Associated Press

BRIITISH

SUNDERLAND — The view from the Wearmouth bridge is a melancholy one. The last shipyard is closing, and the river wear, once smothered in coal dust and hustling with boats, lies silent, waiting for landscapers to turn its banks into Parkland.

The other side of this eerie, elegiac metaphor for a greening, post-industrial Britain lies just up the road, where a sprawling new shopping centre has replaced the clang of hammers on steel with the chirp of busy cash registers.

Britain, once the workshop of the world, is being transformed into a nation of shopkeepers, tourist guides, bankers and high-tech entrepreneurs, and nowhere is this more evident than in north-east England.

Seventy years ago, at the height of empire, British yards built one-third of the world's tonnage, and gruff, grimy, noisy Sunderland was the centre of shipbuilding.

But like most Western ship industries, Britain's has shrunk with the onset of Far East competition. Of 1,528 ships launched under the free-market doctrines of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

New lives

One example is the Metacentre, which claims to be Europe's largest combined shopping and leisure complex with 4.8 kilometres of shopping malls and an indoor amusement park.

But the future of the new Britain depends on whether men in their 40's, who have spent their lives in overall-wearing, hammering, plumbing and riveting, can find new lives as shopkeepers, computer programmers and hotel keepers.

North East Shipbuilders' compensation package includes \$80 million to redevelop the docks and teach workers new skills.

"It's closure on the cheap, a bloody insult to a skilled workforce," said Alan Milburn, a researcher who is heading a campaign to save the shipyards.

Many of the men are hoping the campaign will succeed, and of

a dozen interviewed at random during the dying days of North East Shipbuilders, none appeared to have given any thought to acquiring a new skill.

Brian Brown, a welder, wondered sardonically whether Sunderland needed 2,400 extra shopkeepers. Another welder, Kenyon Downes, noted the failure rate for new businesses is more than 50 per cent.

Men like Brown stand to receive about \$33,000 on average in severance pay. His mortgage is paid off, his children almost grown, but that does not make life on the dole more attractive for a vigorous 49-year-old man who was born and bred in Sunderland and wants to stay here.

The unions insist NESL's modern facilities can still turn a profit. The point to studies predicting a global upturn in shipbuilding in

the 1990's,

Bye to the shipyard

"To write the United Kingdom as a maritime trading island nation out of the world shipbuilding market industrially, economically and strategically crazy," said Milburn.

Most British shipyards were nationalised by Harold Wilson's Labour government in 1977, and since Thatcher's Conservatives came to office in 1979, they have been steadily winding down the industry. With NESL's demise, the state will no longer own any shipyards.

Milburn accuses the government of being so ideologically obsessed with winding down heavy industry that it deliberately resisted outside offers to buy the yards.

But Industry Minister Tony Newton told parliament none of these offers "constituted a viable future."

Sunderland, a city of 200,000 was never a garden spot. A 19th-century travellers' handbook described it as "enshrouded in the blackest gloom of smoke."

Shipbuilding, recorded in Sunderland as far back as 1346, was its lifeline. Its ships kept Britain in touch with its empire and even afterward, in the 1970s, it produced the sturdy and highly popular SD14 cargo ship, the mainstay of modern shipping, more than 150 of which were launched.

Today, its municipal museum illustrates in the recorded commentary accompanying a slide show of Sunderland's history.

"Sunderland is a town with a great past," it says. "Now we're looking for a new kind of future."

Whistles and protest greet innovation at La Scala

By Daniel Liefgreen
Reuter

them of not understanding... but using cinema doesn't seem to me so revolutionary."

To be fair, the logionisti can be unmerciful on opening night. They also turned their wrath on American soprano Cheryl Studer, who arrived in Milan only four days before the premier as a last-minute substitute for ailing Lella Cuberli.

Studer said it was the first time she had been whistled. "It's the last time I substitute someone on opening night," she said.

Apart from the controversial screens, reviews have been highly favourable for popular conductor Riccardo Muti and Chris Merritt, the American tenor in the role of Arnold.

Indeed, the whistling had died down at the second performance on Saturday. But comments from the audience during the intervals showed little support for Ronconi's screens.

"They don't add anything to the opera, I found them very distracting," said one opera-goer.

Asked his opinion of the cinema background, Musician Scully measured his words carefully: "I'm in the pit so I don't see everything. I've only seen some of the projections at rehearsals.

"The whole thing seems a bit like a travesty. I never thought it was a great idea."

But Muti and others strongly defend Ronconi's production. "Some people would have preferred the typical backdrop — Swiss chalets and cows," Ronconi and (scenic director Gianni) Quaranta have opened a path that should be followed without blind imitation," Muti said.

"La Scala has a duty to look ahead, to attempt new things, to not become rusty through routine," he added.

Not everyone agrees with a futuristic approach, however.

Outside La Scala's entrance last weekend, opera fan Giuseppe Fuoco gathered signatures to support a campaign for a law reconstituting Giuseppe Verdi's suggested diapason, or the range of notes sounded by a voice or instrument.

Fuoco says great opera voices are being destroyed by the increasingly rising pitch of orchestras.

"There are a lot of traditionalists in the theatre, I don't accuse

Don't boil away vitamins

ALTHOUGH the part that vitamins play in keeping us healthy is now common knowledge, both their existence and role were only discovered early this century.

Before then, all that was known was that certain elements in our diet were important to our well-being. Thus it was found that the juice of limes prevented scurvy; this disease, caused by a lack of vitamin C, was common among sailors deprived of fresh fruit and vegetables during long voyages.

Most vitamins must be obtained from specific foods, as the human body builds up diet itself. A well-balanced diet should provide us with all we need.

However, much of the vitamin content in the foods we eat is destroyed long before it reaches our digestive systems. This is particularly true of vitamin C, the most vulnerable of all the vitamins. The human body can only store it for up to 24 hours.

Vitamin C is vital for healing wounds and mending broken bones. It also increases the body's ability to absorb iron, one of the most important minerals in nutrition.

The absorption of iron in the body is complex and varies greatly from food to food.

Eggs, for example, contain much iron, but in this form it is not easily absorbed by the body, and in turn, eggs tend to hinder any iron absorption from other foods.

Avocados are an excellent source of iron. Contrary to popular belief, spinach is not a good source. The iron content in lettuce, though considerably less than spinach, is much more readily absorbed.

Much of the vitamin C content is lost in the preparation and cooking of vegetables. Unfortunately, immediately fruit and vegetables are cut or shredded, some of the vitamin is lost by their exposure to the air.

Cooking increases this loss, but if vegetables are cooked in as

little water and as quickly as possible, more vitamin C will be retained.

The water should be boiling before the vegetables are added, and whenever possible vegetables should be steamed. It is better to cook potatoes peeled as their vitamin C content is located just under the skin.

Vitamin B is the umbrella name for several vitamins necessary to the central nervous system. Lack of them can cause depression, fatigue and irritability.

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Avocados are an excellent source of iron. Contrary to popular belief, spinach is not a good source. The iron content in lettuce, though considerably less than spinach, is much more readily absorbed.

Much of the vitamin C content is lost in the preparation and cooking of vegetables. Unfortunately, immediately fruit and vegetables are cut or shredded, some of the vitamin is lost by their exposure to the air.

Cooking increases this loss, but if vegetables are cooked in as

less future than their own. "But you can't sell babies like they were pigs," Sarapi told the mothers.

The buyers are usually wealthy Filipinos but include American servicemen married to Filipinas. A West German woman arrested in Manila in June for heading a syndicate that sold Filipino babies in Europe was deported in December.

Poor, helpless

Like Bernales, most of the mothers settle for payment of their hospital bills and a little cash to tide them over before they go back to work. Most, like Bernales, hope they can keep their next American boyfriend.

Bernales' friend, Pemby, sold her blond, blue-eyed boy for \$350.

Natty Sarapi, administrative officer of the U.S. Pearl Buck Foundation, said prostitutes had approached her for help to sell their babies but she turned them down.

The foundation helps more than 1,000 abandoned Amerasian children around Olongapo receive education and medical care.

Sarapi said mothers often pleaded that they were too poor to give their children a less hope.

Searching for dad

Some abandoned Amerasian children are cared for by church and private groups providing them homes and education.

Many grow up searching for their

fathers in hopes of seeing the United States.

Marvin Gene

Shekel devaluation draws fire

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Labour Party leader Shimon Peres was under attack Wednesday for devaluing Israel's shekel just five days after taking up his new job as finance minister.

Peres devalued the shekel by about five per cent against the dollar Tuesday. The Bank of Israel (central bank) said the move was needed to check speculative purchases of foreign currency.

But bankers and economists said there should have been other measures including wage restraint and budget cuts along with a devaluation. Newspapers said Peres did not consult finance ministry officials.

"The devaluation of the shekel has turned an economic problem into a crisis. With one nervous blow, the economy has been thrown back into the chaotic days of uncertainty and speculation," said Jerusalem Post economics editor Shlomo Maoz.

Bank of Israel Governor Michael Bruno had stressed Peres

to make Tuesday's devaluation, which set a representative rate of the shekel at 1.35 to the dollar, as the speculative buying of foreign currencies threatened to deplete Israeli reserves.

Israel is suffering from its most serious economic slowdown for three years, with industrial output down three per cent, partly because of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Peres was foreign minister in a previous unity government but took on finance in the new coalition to help tilt Labour-affiliated industries and kibbutz agriculture's interests.

As far as Israel's largest industry is concerned, the Labour-affiliated Iron Industries, the devaluation added \$40 million to a heavy dollar-denominated debt.

The economics minister, Yitzhak Modai, was finance minister in 1985 when Israel implemented a programme that brought infla-

tion down to 20 per cent from more than 40%.

He said Wednesday: "From my experience, I can almost tell you what's going to happen. For the next couple of days there won't be heavy demand [for foreign currency] because nobody imagines there can be one devaluation after another. But in a few days, it will start again and again reach a climax and again there will be a necessity for a devaluation."

Aides said that in his forthcoming economic package Peres wants to cut one billion shekels (\$60 million) from a 1988/89 budget worth 7.8 billion (\$28.5 billion).

His plans include taking 200 million shekels (\$120 million) in defence cuts. But Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin says he will fight any attempt to cut his budget, already strained by the extra cost of fighting the Palestinian uprising.

Bahrain boosts defence spending

BAHRAIN (R) — Bahrain is boosting military spending this year by 10 million dinars (\$26.5 million), despite the ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war.

An official publication said Wednesday the government was allocating 66.5 million dinars (\$176.4 million) for defence in calendar 1988, about 14 per cent of the total budget.

The revised military budget compares with the 56.5 million dinars (\$150 million) Bahrain had planned to spend in the year. Defence spending totalled 51.5 million dinars (\$137 million) in 1987.

Western military experts in the region said the move reflected a determination by Gulf Arab states to continue to bolster their

defences in case a Angie ceasefire agreed between Baghdad and Tehran last August broke down.

"All six states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) want to become self-sufficient militarily," said one.

"Now that the war has ended, it would be tempting to spend on other things, but they are determined to strengthen their defences as quickly as they can afford it," he added.

The GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — generally backed Iraq in the eight-year conflict in which Iran frequently attacked shipping serving Baghdad's Arab allies.

The English translation of the weekly official gazette said the new 1988 allocation would be met from reserves.

Western diplomats said the move was probably not intended for any new military projects, but would speed-up payments on work which had already been started.

The money could go to projects including a \$50 million military airbase being built on the south of the island or a \$400 million arms package concluded earlier this year with the United States, they said.

Delivery of 12 advanced F-16 fighter jets included in the \$1.8 billion deal in the second half of 1987 while the aircraft, designed by the U.S. arm, is scheduled for completion during the

year.

Bahrain wanted to buy Stinger missiles from the United States during 1987, but the deal was blocked by Congress amid fears the weapons could be used against Israel.

The island eventually leased the surface-to-missiles and launchers from the Americans for 18 months.

Diplomats said it was unclear how much money Bahrain was contributing from its own pocket to the U.S. arms package.

They say the official figures, though accurate in terms of the budget, seldom reflect the country's actual military spending levels because a major share is donated by its GCC neighbours.

U.S.-EC hormone trade row escalates

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community (EC) said Wednesday that a U.S. decision to impose trade sanctions in retaliation for an EC ban on imports of U.S. hormone-treated meat was totally unjustified and broke world trade rules.

Willy De Clercq, EC commissioner for trade and external relations, said in a statement that he profoundly regretted the U.S. decision to impose sanctions from Jan. 1.

"The U.S. measures are totally unjustified and against international conventions, namely GATT rules," he said, referring to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the body which regulates world trade.

The U.S. sanctions affect \$100 million worth of EC goods. Total trade between the two giant partners last year amounted to \$166 billion.

The U.S. has imposed a ban on imports of meat to the internal market, preventing imports in response to consumer pressure, and waived it for a year — until the end of this month — on imports to allow time to negotiate with the United States.

Washington argues that there is no health risk to humans from eating hormone-treated U.S. meat since U.S. farmers use only safe products. It says the EC's objections amount to a discriminatory trade barrier.

Efforts to find a solution before the deadline have failed, and the EC will shut out some \$10 million worth of U.S. trade from Jan. 1.

"Every country, and the Community as such, has a duty to implement the measures it thinks fit to protect the health of its consumers and to apply them in a non-discriminatory manner," De Clercq said.

The EC executive commission had drawn up a list of U.S. products that could form the basis for counter-retaliation.

"Imposing them will depend on a decision by the council of ministers," he said.

Speaking on French Radio Télevisée, EC Commission president Jacques Delors said the EC would retaliate by imposing 100 per cent customs duties on four categories of U.S. goods.

"The entire dossier would hit all sectors of U.S. agricultural firms, dried sweet corn, nuts in shells and dried fruits, he said, but gave no indication of when they would do so.

Imports to the EC in these four products equals the value of EC imports which would be hit by a single tariff, Delors said.

The U.S. move will affect trade in citrus tomatoes, tomato and sun-dried tomato, alcoholic beverages, instant coffee, bananas, fruit juices, certain pork products and pet food.

The American move is an undesirable intrusion into the

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The contractors who had been qualified previously for the Seventh Education Project and willing to participate in the following bid are requested to get bid documents from the projects and buildings Directorate, Ministry of Education from 24/12/1988 with the following conditions:

A. The Seventh Education Project is partially financed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

B. Description of Tender Price JD Bond JD

1. Tender No. 49/D/88 Construction of school building Kuthra and Al-Karak Area (7740) sq.m.

2. Tender No. 50/D/88 Construction of school buildings in Al-Shallaleh and Alemal Area (8030) sq.m.

3. Tender No. 51/D/88 Construction of school buildings in Almazar and Rouiam Area (5740) sq.m.

C. Last date for purchasing copies of Tender documents is 31/1/1989.

D. Last date for submitting financial offers is 7/2/1989 at 12 noon at the Ministry of Education.

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AMF lends \$254m to 3 Arab states

ABU DHABI (OPECNA) — The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) has extended \$254 million in loans to Algeria, Iraq and Syria. Algeria will receive \$113 million to offset the deficit in its balance of payments, bringing the fund's total lending to the country to \$188 million. The credit carries an annual interest rate of between 3.75 and 4.75 per cent and is repayable in three years. Iraq is to receive \$112 million, bringing total credits made by the fund to the country to \$524 million. Earlier, the fund extended \$29 million to Syria bringing its total lending to the country to \$77.50 million. The loan carries an annual interest rate ranging between 5.2 and 6.4 per cent and is repayable in 10 years. Since its inception in 1977, the Abu Dhabi-based fund's total lending to Arab states has reached \$1.96 billion.

French firm wins big Iraqi contract

PARIS (R) — French state-owned steel group Usinor Saclor said it had won a contract worth \$130 million to supply steel tubes for a projected Iraqi oil pipeline linking Baghdad with the Kirkuk region. A spokeswoman said Usinor subsidiary GTS Industrie won the contract to deliver 140,000 tonnes of steel tubes. Details of how the contract would be financed were not immediately available.

Kuwait plans joint venture in plastics

KUWAIT (OPECNA) — The Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) of Kuwait is planning to enter plastics by producing polypropylene after having successfully produced chemical fertilizers. A company source said that PIC and Union Carbide would sign a licensing and basic engineering agreement by the middle of February 1989. Polypropylene is used by industries making toys, car bumpers and furniture. The plant will be set up in the Shuaiba industrial area and will have a yearly capacity of 80,000 tonnes. It will come onstream in early 1992. The establishment of the plant in Kuwait, the source stated, would revive the national plastics industry.

Oman, Iran sign trade agreement

NICOSIA, CYPRUS (API) — Oman signed a trade accord with Iran and agreed to set up a joint cooperation commission to boost economic links, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) has reported. IRNA said the first meeting of the joint commission will be held in Muscat in March, with subsequent sessions alternating between Tehran and the Omani capital. The commission will review commercial issues as well as economic and industrial cooperation. The Iranians are seeking aid for their massive post-war reconstruction programme. Oman, whose oil deposits are modest compared to its Arab neighbours like Saudi Arabia, is driving to diversify its economy. IRNA said a team of Omani experts will visit Tehran in the next few weeks to investigate Iran's industrial possibilities. An Iranian delegation was scheduled to go to Oman before April next year. The Iranians will also stage an industrial exhibition in Muscat, the agency added.

EIB to lend Ethiopia \$11.5 million

BRUSSELS (R) — Ethiopia is to receive \$11.5 million under a new loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Community's development bank, to help finance construction of a new port terminal at Assab. The port extension is part of a transport scheme costing over \$140 million to which the World Bank and African Development Bank are also contributing, the EIB said in a statement. The terminal, which will be able to handle general cargo, container and roll-on/roll-off ships, will be built between the middle of next year and 1992. The 17-year loan for 10 million European Currency Units (\$11.6 million) carries an interest rate of three per cent, the EIB said. It is being provided under the Lome Convention, a trade and aid pact between the European Community and 66 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Cuba expects 1.5-2.5% growth in '89

HAVANA (R) — Cuba's economy will grow between 1.5 and 2.5 per cent in 1989, the head of the Central Planning Board (Juceplan) was quoted as saying. He said growth of the global social product (GSP), the communist equivalent of GNP, would result from a bigger sugar crop and higher output of other farm products, improvements in the oil and nickel industries and better results in the fields of electronics, medical equipment and construction materials. Exports other than sugar are expected to increase 17 per cent. The target for 1989 compared with growth of 2.5 per cent reached in 1988, according to a figure provided by President Fidel Castro earlier this month. That result did not offset losses in 1987 when the economy shrank 3.2 per cent after

expanding an average 7.2 per cent during the 1981-85 period. During the national assembly's meeting, Castro said Cuba's major economic problem was an acute shortage of foreign currency. Castro stressed the need for investments in areas such as tourism to help generate or save hard currency.

Uzbekis throw out Kremlin budget

MOSCOW (R) — In an unprecedented move the parliament of Soviet Uzbekistan has rejected a draft government budget and has pushed through important changes, according to the official Soviet news agency TASS. TASS hailed it as a further sign of political change in the country and described it as "without precedent." The Uzbek Supreme Soviet, like other elected bodies in the Soviet Union, has for decades acted as a rubber stamp for Communist Party and government decisions. Deputies threw out the 1989 budget on the grounds that industry and agriculture targets set by ministers were too low, TASS said. It did not say when the session took place. Targets were increased and tens of millions of roubles earmarked for industry were channelled into social, ecological and building programmes after the budget was discussed with ministry representatives, TASS said. Reforms under way as part of Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika (restructuring) programme are intended to turn parliaments into working institutions, from the Supreme Soviet downwards.

Algeria reports new oil strike

ALGIERS (R) — The Algerian state petroleum agency Sonatrach has struck oil in an area close to the Tunisia border, the agency has said. The field is located near Negrine in Khencelia province, 400 kilometres southeast of Algiers, at depths of more than 3,000 metres, an official statement has said. The statement said light, sulphur-free oil with a good proportion of gas had been found and long-term tests were currently under way.

Japanese spend \$34b on wining, dining

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese companies spent a record 4.19 trillion yen (\$33.8 billion) last year on entertainment and gifts, according to the National Tax Administration Agency. The agency said spending by hospital and life insurance industry was highest at 9.7 million yen (\$77.680 per firm). The 4.19 trillion yen total for entertainment spending represented an average daily expenditure of 11.4 billion yen (\$91.94 million) — a 6.1 per cent increase over 1988. Wining and dining clients cost companies a total 3.95 trillion yen (\$31.8 billion), the agency said. Japanese executives are often given carte blanche to entertain at exclusive nightclubs and Japanese-style inns where an evening meal can cost \$300 or more. Inviting clients for rounds of golf and exchanging gifts are other customary entertainment expenses. The agency said Japanese firms spent an additional 355.9 billion yen (\$2.87 billion) on donations to political organisations in 1987, a 16.2 per cent increase over the previous year.

Turkey continues hiking petrol prices

ANKARA (R) — Turkey raised consumer prices for petrol and petroleum products by up to 20 per cent Wednesday, the seventh increase this year. The new prices are effective immediately, the energy and mineral resources ministry announced. The cost of top grade 95 octane fuel per litre rose 70 lira (44 cents) to 700 lira (50 cents). Normal grade gas raised to 750 lira (41 cents) from 670 lira (38 cents). Diesel oil and kerosene prices rose to 570 lira (31 cents) from 490 lira (37 cents) per litre. The highest increase, 20 per cent, was for cooking gas, up to 6,000 lira (\$3.21) from 5,000 lira (\$2.76) for a 12 kilogramme bottle. Ministry sources said super and normal grade petrol prices had risen by 11.6 and 10.9 per cent respectively since the end of last year. Prime Minister Turgut Ozal has announced big increases in other state-run goods and services during the past year to reduce Turkey's ballooning budget deficit and inflation.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Wednesday Dec. 28, 1988
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	Japanese yen (per 10

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Ragamuffin maintains lead

SYDNEY (AP) — Ragamuffin, skippered by veteran Australian sailor Syd Fischer, maintained its lead Wednesday in the 1,013-kilometre AWA Sydney to Hobart yachting classic. The Maxi yacht was experiencing perfect sailing conditions in Bass Strait late Wednesday. It was 217 nautical miles from the finish in Hobart and 70 nautical miles ahead of Great News. Great News, skippered jointly by Australians John Calvert-Jones and David Forbes, held the lead in the race for handicap honours. Ragamuffin was expected to arrive in Hobart on Thursday night, giving Fischer his first victory in 18 attempts at the Sydney to Hobart race, which is regarded as one of the world's greatest ocean races.

Lewis will compete in European meetings

SANTA MONICA (R) — Two-time Olympic champion Carl Lewis will compete in at least three European meetings this winter but will skip the IAAF world indoor athletics championships, his manager said Tuesday. The 27-year-old American, who won gold medals at 100 metres and the long jump at Seoul, also probably will miss the International Amateur Athletic Federation's (IAAF) major outdoor competition for 1989 — the fifth World Cup in Barcelona, Spain, in September. Joe Douglas, his manager, told Reuters. "The World Cup, to me, is a minor meet," Douglas said.

Tunis prepares for rally

TUNIS (R) — Tunisia put out the flags Tuesday for the Paris-Dakar rally, renamed the Paris-Tunis-Dakar after the organisers of the 10-year-old event changed the traditional route to leave out neighbouring Algeria. Municipal workers strung banners of welcome across the road into town from the port of La Goulette, where two ships arrive from Barcelona Wednesday morning with the competitors. Red and white Tunisian flags decorated the city centre square where the 390 cars and motorbikes will start their 9,700-km race through Northwest

Africa. The Tunisian authorities have welcomed the rally in the hope that it will encourage visitors to explore the Saharan South, seen as a high-potential but unexploited area for tourism.

Van Basten 'proud' of award

MILAN (AP) — Dutch soccer star Marco Van Basten said Tuesday that he was "happy and proud" to have been named the 1988 winner of the "Ballon D'Or," the award given by a French magazine to the best European player of the year. The 24-year-old centre forward of the Dutch national team and of Italian champion A.C. Milan was congratulated by his teammates as Van Basten resumed training at Milanello Tuesday for Saturday's major league round. Van Basten was the top striker at the European championships in West Germany last summer and played a few but decisive matches with Milan in the last Italian championship.

Soviets beat U.S. hockey team

DAVOS (AP) — Cory Millen, top U.S. scorer at the Winter Olympics, tallied three goals to tie the game in the second period, but Kriviy Moscow fought back to an 8-4 victory over "USA Selects" Tuesday night in the Spengler Cup Hockey Tournament. Sergei Makarov scored twice to give Moscow an early 2-0 lead. Millen, who normally plays for USA Selects, a team of U.S. expatriates playing for European teams that formed for the tournament. After Millen scored his third goal, on a power play, tying the game 3-3 at 13:21 of the second period, bottles thrown on the ice forced a 15-minute delay. When the ice was clean again, the Soviets took control of the game. Sergei Charin, a member of the Soviet national squad, scored at 16:54 of the second period to make it 4-3 while penalties had reduced both teams to three players each. In earlier second-round action Tuesday, Davos selection, a mixed Swiss-Canadian team, defeated Czechoslovakia's VSZ Kosice 4-3. Lance Nethery scored twice in the second period for Davos and Swiss goalie Richie Buehr made 44 saves.

Super Bowl '88— anyone's guess

NEW YORK (AP) — It takes a neutral observer to define Saturday's play-off game between Mike Ditka's Chicago Bears and the Philadelphia Eagles, coached by Ditka's one-time defensive coordinator and longtime antagonist, Buddy Ryan.

"I think they'll bloody each other up; they're both real physical teams and their game will be real ugly," offensive tackle Tim Irwin of Minnesota said. It was the Vikings' 28-17 victory over the Los Angeles Rams Monday in the National Football Conference wild-card game that sent Minnesota on to San Francisco.

In fact, one of Jerry Glanville's never-shy Oilers was brash

and put the Eagles up against the Bears in Chicago.

"Our will be perceived as pretty, but the same thing will be going on in our game, too."

Tough wild cards

The National Football League's run for the Super Bowl looks as wide open as it has ever been this year. In fact, a case could be made that the two wild-card winners — Houston and Minnesota — enter the round as strong as any of the eight remaining competitors.

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Roh orders crackdown on violent protests S. Korea accepts talks with North

SEOUL (AP) — South Korea sent a message to communist North Korea Wednesday agreeing to high-level political and military talks aimed at reducing tension on the divided peninsula.

Prime Minister Kang Young-Hoon suggested in the letter to North Korean counterpart Yon Hyung Muk that they head delegations to alternating talks in Seoul and Pyongyang to discuss non-interference, cooperation in select areas and building "mutual trust" in military matters.

"To wipe out mutual distrust and restore trust between them the two Koreas should recognise each others' ideologies and systems, conduct dialogue on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference and develop cooperative relations on the principle of mutuality until unification is achieved," Kang wrote in the letter delivered to the North at the border truce site of Panmunjom.

The response did not appear to fully meet a Nov. 16 North Korean proposal for wide ranging talks on reduction of military forces. The South did not refer to troop reduction, and its proposal was more vague.

Kang made no reference to the North's proposal that talks also negotiate withdrawal of the U.S. forces based in the South under a mutual defence pact. The United States has 42,000 troops in the South. South Korea's letter also prop-

Philippine army set for all-out drive against Communists

MANILA (R) — Defence Minister General Fidel Ramos says the military plans an all-out offensive against Communist rebels in the Philippines in 1989.

The objective is to break the back of the insurgency by the end of President Corazon Aquino's term in 1992.

He told Philippine reporters at a year-end press conference Tuesday that the armed forces had laid the groundwork in 1988 for the coming all-out push against the guerrillas, which the military hopes will cripple the insurgency.

"For the first time in a long period we have stemmed and

reversed the tide of the Communist insurgency," Ramos declared.

He said the 160,000-strong Philippine armed forces were now ready to launch an all-out offensive against the Communist rebels in 1989."

The Daily Globe newspaper, published by Aquino's speechwriter Teodoro Locsin, said in a front-page report Wednesday that the guerrillas planned to counter with attacks on U.S. military bases and multinational companies in the Philippines if Washington stepped up help for the armed forces.

There was no immediate comment on the report from the

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Seven die in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Police said seven black men were shot and killed after a crowd attack on a house in South Africa's Natal province, scene of persistent fighting between rival black political factions. A crowd attacked a policeman guarding the house in Mpumalanga near Hammarsdale Tuesday, wounding him with a shotgun, police said in their daily report on political unrest. Reinforcements arrived and dispersed the attackers with shotgun fire. Pretoria police said.

Death squads plan to revive action

SAN SALVADOR (AP) — A group identifying itself as a new right-wing death squad has vowed to avenge each leftist assassination and car-bombing, according to a communiqué. "The only way to achieve the total extermination of this horde of terrorist killers is by the same means and with the same force they use," said the communiqué issued by a group calling itself the Revolutionary Anti-Communist Exterminating Action, or by its Spanish initials ARDE. The communiqué was delivered to media outlets last weekend, and several radio stations began broadcasting it Tuesday. In the early 1980s death squads regularly issued communiques threatening individuals or leftist groups, and those threats were frequently carried out, but the last such communiqué was issued in June 1987.

Gunfire exchanged in Suriname border

SURINAME (AP) — One soldier was wounded Tuesday during a gun battle in eastern Suriname between troops and gunmen believed to be anti-government guerrillas, an army spokesman said. Major Badrassein Sital said soldiers at Albina, on Suriname's border with French Guiana, "exchanged gunfire" Tuesday with unidentified gunmen. Rebel leader Ronny Brunswijk's "Jungle Commando" is based nearby on Stoelman island in the Maroni river, which separates the two nations. Sital gave no other details on the incident.

Managua wants to talk peace with U.S.

NICARAGUA (R) — Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government, which has been battling U.S.-backed contra rebels since 1981, said Tuesday it will present a peace proposal to George Bush as soon as he takes over as U.S. president. Defence Minister Humberto Ortega, brother of President Daniel Ortega, said Nicaragua would wait until Bush's Jan. 20 inauguration to unveil its proposals. Ortega also said the Nicaraguan government was willing to renew negotiations with the contras in Managua but had not received any proposals for talks from the rebels. A ceasefire in the Nicaraguan war has been in effect since April but the two sides have been unable to reach a definitive peace accord.

China executes seven criminals

HONG KONG (AP) — Seven hardened criminals were executed in Shanghai immediately after their sentences were announced by officials at a public rally in a local sports stadium, pro-Beijing newspaper reported Wednesday. The Chinese-language Ta Kung Pao gave details on only two of the criminals, food market worker Cheng Zhiqiang and construction labourer Lin Tiebo. It said that on seven occasions in the first half of the year, Cheng robbed single women who were walking in early-morning hours before streets became crowded. The newspaper reported he would punch and choke his victims, breaking the nose of one and causing another to have a miscarriage. Lin killed a woman after he unsuccessfully tried to rape her Oct. 16, the report said. She died when Lin stuffed his handkerchief into her mouth and later cut up the body trying to hide the evidence, the newspaper said. Executions in China generally are carried out with a single bullet to the back of the head.



Rajiv Gandhi

India, Pakistan discuss nuclear pact

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan and India, which have fought three wars, may soon sign an agreement not to attack each other's nuclear installations, officials of the two countries said.

"Unlawful and disorderly developments and excessive demands gushing forth in the course of liquidating authoritarianism... are threatening not only democracy but also the stability of the free economy," Roh told a meeting of key government officials.

Opposition and dissident groups immediately denounced Roh's statement and charged the government was seeking excuses to oppress opponents and avoid any loss of government authority.

The national assembly is controlled by the opposition.

Top opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung said Roh's directive was "a plot schemed by fascists to lose their invested rights."

The government and opposition officials made the texts of Roh's and Kim's comments available to news organisations.

44 suspected Sinhalese extremists found murdered

COLOMBO (Agencies) — Authorities have found the charred bodies of 44 suspected anti-government militants this week in southern Sri Lanka, a senior police officer said Wednesday.

The police officer, who asked not to be identified, said in an interview that the victims had been shot to death and then burned.

A government communiqué blamed the murders on the People's Revolutionary Red Army, which claims Sinhalese radicals are responsible for the escalating ethnic violence on this tropical Indian Ocean island.

The charred bodies were found along roads in southern Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese heartland, the officer said.

At least 19 bodies were found Monday and Tuesday near Tissamaharama, about 175 kilometres south of Colombo, the officer said. Other bodies were discovered in nearby towns of Dickwella, Middeniya, Tangalle, Weerakatiya and Lunugamveha, he added.

An extremist Sinhalese group, the People's Liberation Front, oppose the government's efforts to end the five-year-old insurgency by militant Tamils demanding a separate homeland in the north and east provinces. More than 8,500 people have died in the Wednesday.

They said it was not certain whether the accord, which would be a major development in long-term relations, could be completed in time for signing at scheduled meetings this week between Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan and Rajiv Gandhi of India.

"In principle, yes we are ready to sign. The question is when to sign," a senior Indian official told Reuters.

"The point is that every draft needs to be referred to the respective governments before an agreement is signed. It is being talked about now between the two countries and subject to those consultations, we will sign it," the official said.

"We are hoping it will be signed this week," a Pakistani official said.

Gandhi, due in Islamabad Thursday, will be making the first working visit to Pakistan by an Indian prime minister since his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru went in 1960.

Gandhi's visit for a summit of South Asian leaders is a sign of the beginning of a major change in relations with Pakistan which have long been shrouded in suspicion, Pakistan's nuclear programme high among them.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 but has not done it again and insists its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful.

Opposition spokesman Patricio

fighting.

Sinhalese extremists contend the accord grants too many concessions and have vowed to kill anyone who supports the agreement.

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request for a meeting. It said it would send a letter listing its stars here.

Pinocchet lost his bid for eight more years in the presidency when Chileans voted 55 per cent to 42 per cent against extending his rule in the yes-or-no ballot.

The general, who took power in a bloody 1973 coup against elected Marxist President Salvador Allende, can stay in office until March 1990. But he must call competitive presidential and congressional elections three months before stepping down.

But the constitution keeps a pivotal political role for the military through a national security council.

Pinocchet, who is allowed to stay as army commander until 1997, can also effectively appoint one third of the future senate under the terms of the constitution which was approved in a 1980 plebiscite.

Describing the minister's conditions as "arrogant," the opposition said it was withdrawing its

says was fraudulent.

LOS ANGELES (R) — Hal Ashby, who directed such critically acclaimed films as "Coming Home," "Bound for Glory" and "Shampoo," died of cancer Tuesday at the age of 59, a family spokesman said. Ashby, who died at his home in the Los Angeles film star colony of Malibu, won a Golden Globe Oscar for editing the 1967 film "In the Heat of the Night," starring Rod Steiger and Sidney Poitier, and was nominated for an Oscar for directing the anti-Vietnam war film "Coming Home." Considered one of the most wide-ranging directors in Hollywood, Ashby saw his film "Harold and Maude," about the love affair of a 19-year-old youth and an 80-year-old woman, played by Ruth Gordon, become a cult classic. He chronicled the successful tour of the United States by the Rolling Stones in 1981 in the film "Let's Spend the Night Together." Known for giving precise instructions to actors, Ashby also directed "Shampoo," which told of the affairs of an amorous hairdresser, played by Warren Beatty. The film "Bound for Glory" was a biography of another singer, Woody Guthrie, played by David Carradine.

The far-reaching and costly October directive is seen by industry experts to reflect a new attitude that close inspections are not enough to keep older aircraft safe and that in many cases sections of planes must be routinely replaced even if no defect is apparent.

In October, the FAA directed the replacement of 7,200 rivets on every older Boeing 737 to guard against a repeat of the Aloha accident. A string of previous FAA orders following the Aloha incident focused only on requiring closer inspections.

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